

# **PROCEEDINGS**

## **50th Annual Convention**



**May 25 - 29, 1997**

**Hotel Inter-Continental**  
Chicago, Illinois

Edited by  
**Charles Heller**

**Cantors Assembly**

Jewish Theological Seminary of America  
3080 Broadway New York, New York 10027-4649

*Editor's Note:*

The contributions in this volume have been edited from audio tape recordings. Since there are always differences between spoken and written language, this printed version will occasionally differ very slightly from what was actually said. Every effort has been made to consult the speakers to ensure that this final printed version conveys their intentions.

The Editor gratefully acknowledges the kind assistance of Hazzanim Abraham Lubin, Henry Rosenblum and Abraham Shapiro.

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## SUNDAY, MAY 25

**3:00 P.M.**

### **Registration/Convention Desk/South Lobby**

*Please note: Delegates must register first with Convention Desk before registering at hotel desk.*

Convention exhibits/Empire Room/7th Floor  
Display of Jewish music, art, synagogue and personal ritual objects, books, recordings, education material.

Exhibits will be open daily beginning Monday.

**6:00 P.M.**

### **Dinner/King Arthur Court/3rd Floor**

הבה נשיר וברכת המזון:

Hazzanim Joel Gordon, Long Grove, IL and Roger Weisberg, Long Grove, IL

**8:00 P.M.**

### **Nightly Sing or Swim/Ballroom of the Americas/Lobby Level**

בעל חפלת: Hazzan Josef Chazan, Mission Viejo, CA

**9:00 P.M.**

### **Sing or Swim/FC Floor**

Fun evening, with songs and keyboard

Master of Ceremonies: Hazzan Steven Stoehr,  
Northbrook, IL

Convention Accompanists: Sonia Kass and Tova Morcos

## **MONDAY, MAY 26**

**7:15 A.M.**

**שחרית Egalitarian**

**King Arthur Court/3rd Floor**

**בעל תפלה:** Hazzan David Lipp, Louisville, KY

**בעלת קריאה:** Hazzan Deborah Togut, New York, NY

**שחרית Traditional**

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

**בעל תפלה:** Hazzan Robert Kieval, Rockville, MD

**בעל קריאה:** Hazzan Nathaniel Schudrich,

Rockville, MD

**Breakfast**

Your choice. (See eating place list)

**10:00 A.M.**

**Akiva Zimmerman Remembers**

**King Arthur Court/3rd Floor**

Chair: Hazzan Eric Wasser, Wilmette, IL

**11:00 A.M.**

**Maximizing Your Retirement Investments;**

**Preparing For The Future**

**King Arthur Court/3rd Floor**

Chair: Hazzan Abraham Shapiro, Lynbrook, NY

Presented by: Nina Rone, CPA, Administrator,

Joint Retirement Board. Ms. Rone is a Registered

Investment Advisor. Her chief concern in her

position with the Joint Retirement Board is to

assist families in understanding the relationship

between investing and future security.



## MONDAY, MAY 26

**12:00 P.M.**

**Chicago's Legendary Hazzanim**

**King Arthur Court/3rd Floor**

Chair: Hazzan Chaim Najman, Southfield, MI

Presented by: Judith Karzen, conductor of the Halevi Choral Society, recalling the personalities and talents of Chicago's great hazzanim and composers of the early years of this century, and a sampling of their creativity.

**1:00 P.M.**

**Lunch**

**Grand Ballroom/7th Floor**

**2:45 P.M.**

**מגילה**

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

Chair: Hazzan Saul Prombaum, La Crosse, WI

**3:00 P.M.**

**Placement Practicum**

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

Chair: Hazzan Morton Shames, Springfield, MA  
A novel demonstration of handling position-seeking interviews, i.e. when to speak, when to keep silent. Questions you may be asked for which you should be prepared. Questions you *should* consider asking, and how. Here is a chance to observe a staged interview in process.

Volunteers will meet with an actual lay congregational Cantorial Search Committee who will assist in this demonstration.

Participants: Hazzanim Judith Meyersberg, Long Grove, IL; Devin Goldenberg, Paradise Valley, AZ; and Arnold Schultz, Wheeling, IL.

**Proceedings of the Cantors Assembly 50th Annual Convention – May, 1997** \_\_\_\_\_

**MONDAY, MAY 26**

**4:30 - 5:30 P.M.**

**Presentation of New Transcontinental Publications**

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

Led by Dr. Judith Tischler, Faculty, H.L. Miller

Cantorial School; Director, Transcontinental Music.

Assisted by An Ensemble of Singers

**6:15 P.M.**

**Dinner**

**Grand Ballroom/7th Floor**

Audio-Visual Presentation of Chicago Musical

Tradition

Presented by: Barry Serota

הרבנית נשייר ובעת המזון: Hazzanim Sheldon

Levin, Philadelphia, PA; Joel Gordon, Long

Grove, IL; Roger Weisberg, Long Grove, IL.

**8:00 P.M.**

**Traditional "Concert" מעריב**

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

הרבן הצעיר: Hazzan Howard Dardashti,

Cherry Hill, NJ

**9:00 P.M.**

**"Current Images of Jews in the Movies: Not a**

**Pretty Picture"**

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

Chair: Hazzan Henry Rosenblum, Highland Park, IL

Presented by: Gene Siskel, Film Critic - *Chicago*

*Tribune*, CBS News, *TV Guide* and *Siskel & Ebert*

**10:30 P.M.**

**Promenade Concert**

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

Master of Ceremonies: Hazzan Jacob Mendelson,

White Plains, NY



## TUESDAY, MAY 27

**7:15 A.M.**

שחרית

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

בעל תפילה: Hazzan Eugene Rosner, Wynnewood, PA

**Breakfast:** Your choice. (See eating place list)

**9:00 A.M.**

**50th Annual Meeting**

**King Arthur Court/3rd Floor**

**(Closed session - members and spouses only)**

**Presiding:** Hazzan Abraham Lubin, President

**Induction of New Members:**

Hazzan Kurt Silbermann, Englewood, NJ

**Presentation of Commissions:**

Hazzanim Nancy Abramson, Nissim Benyamini,  
Rebecca Carmi, Steven C. Berke, Don Alan Croll,  
Dr. Donald Phillip Fischer, Daniel S. Katz,  
Kimberly Sue Lewison Komrad, David A. Lipp,  
Israel D. Man, Abraham Mehler, JoAnn Rice,  
Bruce Herbert Siegel, Alan Michael Smolen.

**Report of the Nominations Committee:**

Hazzan Stephen J. Stein, Akron, OH

**Elections**

**Report on "Mahzor 101":**

Hazzan Chaim Najman, Southfield, MI

**Memorial to Samuel Rosenbaum זל:**

Gayna Sauler Kieval, Rockville, MD

Hazzanim Ivan Perlman, Boca Raton, FL;

Gregory Yaroslav, San Bernardino, CA

**חוכרה:** Hazzan Abraham Lubin, Bethesda, MD

## **TUESDAY, MAY 27**

**10:15 A.M.**

**The Quest for Meaning in Text, Tradition and Liturgy**

**Symposium A**

**King Arthur Court/3rd Floor**

Chair: Hazzan Alan Smolen, Elgin, IL

“The Rise of the Inhumanities; The Current

Cultural and Spiritual Ambiance in Jewish Life”

A wide ranging view of the questions of the day  
and of the century. Where have we come from?

What has happened to us in the last half-century?

What is our role as hazzanim, rabbis,  
congregations in the fast approaching  
millennium?

**Presented by:**

**Professor Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Professor of  
Bible, University of Chicago**

**Discussion**

Moderator: Hazzan Stephen J. Stein, Akron, OH

**11:30 A.M.**

**Symposium B**

**King Arthur Court/3rd Floor**

“The Faith, Prayer and Spiritual Health of the  
Seekers for God”

A discussion of the developing search for  
spiritual values in new prayers, new rituals, new  
synagogue paradigms and new beliefs. What  
challenges do they pose to the health of the  
Jewish religious community? What are their  
potential contributions?

**Presented by:**

**Dr. Neil Gillman, Aaron Rabinowitz-Simon  
Rifkind Associate Professor and Chair of the  
Department of Jewish Philosophy at the Jewish  
Theological Seminary of America; Professor of**



## TUESDAY, MAY 27

Theology, Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

### Discussion

**1:00 P.M.**

**Lunch**

**Grand Ballroom/7th Floor**

**2:30 P.M.**

**Buses depart from Hotel for a trip to Highland Park's North Suburban Synagogue Beth El**

*Note: You will want to dress for the evening. Buses will not return to Hotel until after the concert.*

**3:15 P.M.**

**Gather at the Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette, IL to share songs of peace and unity**  
Sim Shalom - Max Janowski

Soloist: Hazzan David Silverstein, Los Angeles, CA  
Hallelujah - Louis Lewandowski

**4:00 P.M.**

**Arrive at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El**

**Egalitarian: Field Family Sanctuary**  
**בעל תפילה:** Hazzan Marla Barugel, Rumson, NJ

**Traditional: מנוחה: Sager Bet Midrash**

**בעל תפילה:** Hazzan Richard Wolberg, Fall River, MA

**זיכרון שואה:**

Hazzan Shabtai Ackerman, Deerfield Beach, FL

**עדרبية:**

**בעל תפילה:** Hazzan Brian Mayer, Providence, RI  
and Convention Octet (Hazzanim Marla Barugel, Janet Krupnick, Liz Berke, Carol Chesler, David Lipp, David Barash, Eric Wasser, Joseph Ness)  
"ערבית לחיי" in tribute to the memory of

Professor Max Wohlberg

## **TUESDAY, MAY 27**

**5:15 P.M.**

**Installation of newly elected officers and  
members of the Executive Council**  
Installing Officer: Hazzan Stephen J. Stein, Akron, OH

**6:00 P.M.**

**Dinner/Blumberg Auditorium**  
הנִשְׂמָחַת בְּרָכַת הַמֶּוּן and השיר נִבְחָה: Hazzan Riki Lippitz,  
South Orange, NJ; and Lori Lippitz of the  
Maxwell St. Klezmer Band  
ספרית העمر: Hazzan Brian Mayer, Providence, RI

**7:30 P.M.**

**Buses leave for short drive to North Shore  
Congregation Israel, Glencoe, IL**

**7:45 P.M.**

**Concert: "Songs of Our People"**  
Guest appearance by the Maxwell St. Klezmer Band  
Participants: Hazzanim Steven Berke, Bellaire,  
TX; Rafi Frieder, Great Neck, NY; Faith Gurney,  
Baltimore, MD; Kimberly Komrad, Owings Mills,  
MD; Melvin Luterman, Baltimore, MD; Chaim  
Naiman, Southfield, MI; Charles Osborne.  
Newton Centre, MA; Alisa Pomerantz-Boro, San  
Diego, CA; Henry Rosenblum, Highland Park, IL;  
Eliot Vogel, Penn Valley, PA; Sam Weiss,  
Baltimore, MD; Sol Zim, Hollis Hills, NY;  
together with the Solomon Schechter Day School  
Choir under the direction of Roz Ebstein and the  
Jewish Community Singers of Greater Chicago,  
directed by Cantor Richard Cohn of North Shore  
Congregation Israel.  
Accompanist: Sonia Kass  
Master of Ceremonies: Hazzan Steven Stoehr,  
Northbrook, IL



## **TUESDAY, MAY 27**

**Presentation of Kavod Award to Harvey L. Miller**

**10:30 P.M.  
Buses return to Hotel**

**11:30 P.M.  
Promenade Concert  
Renaissance Room/5th Floor  
Master of Ceremonies: Hazzan Jacob Mendelson,  
White Plains, NY**

## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 28**

**7:15 A.M.  
שחרית  
Renaissance Room/5th Floor  
Hazzan Pinchas Spiro, Des Moines, IA**

**Breakfast: Your choice. (See eating place list)**

**8:15 A.M.  
Post-Breakfast Meeting  
Toledo Room/5th Floor  
Open Committee Meeting of the Tri-States Area  
for the 1998 Jubilee Convention in New York City**

**9:30 A.M.  
Symposium C  
Renaissance Room/5th Floor  
"How Shall We Sing the Songs of the Lord?"  
Chair: Hazzan Sheldon Levin, Philadelphia, PA  
This session will focus on answers which  
colleagues and composers have created to deal  
with the growing demand for enhanced musical  
participation in the service.**

## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 28**

### **Presented by:**

Hazzanim Nathan Lam, Los Angeles, CA, and Linda Kates, Los Angeles, CA, will present "Shabbat at Stephen S. Wise Temple", a mixture of Nusah, Hazzanut, Congregation and Meshorerim (ages 8 - 25).

Hazzan Chaim Najman, Southfield, MI will outline the "Shirei Shabbat" program and alternative services at his congregation Shaarey Zedek.

Ari Priven, B'nai Jeshurun, New York, NY, will demonstrate his all congregational singing approach to tefilah.

Sol Zim, Hollis Hills, NY will share excerpts from his new service composed for congregational participation.

Here is an opportunity to listen to four successful answers to the call for even greater congregational participation.

**11:30 A.M.**

### **A Foretaste of Prayer Books to Come**

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

Chair: Hazzan Carey Cohen, Milwaukee, WI

Presented by: Dr. Marcia Falk, poet, scholar and translator of Hebrew and Yiddish.

Dr. Falk received her B.A. in philosophy from Brandeis University and her Ph.D. in English and comparative literature from Stanford. She has been a Fulbright Scholar and a Postdoctoral Fellow in Bible and Hebrew literature at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and has taught Hebrew and English literature and Bible at



## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 28**

Stanford, the State University of New York at Binghamton and the Claremont Colleges. She is the author of a widely acclaimed translation of *The Song of Songs* (Harper, 1990) and of a long-awaited new Hebrew-English *siddur*, *The Book of Blessings: New Jewish Prayers for Daily Life, the Sabbath, and the New Moon Festival* (Harper, 1996).

Dr. Falk will read selections from her prayer book and speak about some of the theological, spiritual, and social issues addressed in her new liturgy. Among the topics she will explore are how we envision and address Divinity in prayer; how we can address contemporary concerns in our synagogue services; how to create Jewish spiritual communities that are fully inclusive of women and men; and how we can integrate poetry and new musical forms in our liturgical expression.

**1:00 P.M.**

**Lunch - Grand Ballroom/7th Floor**

**Luncheon Meeting for members of CIAA  
Burnham Room/8th Floor**

**2:15 P.M.**

מגנזה

Renaissance Room/5th Floor

Chair: Hazzan Alan Smolen, Elgin, IL

**2:30 P.M.**

**Three Concurrent sessions on "How to..."**

**Session A**

King Arthur Court/3rd Floor

Chair: Hazzan Neil Schwartz, Reading, PA

**Updating Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program**

How do we train a young Jew for life, not only for an event? How can we reinforce the sense of communal responsibility that bar/bat mitzvah

## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 28**

implies? This session will examine ways of improving the bar/bat mitzvah programming in your synagogue, based on a model created at the Academy for Jewish Studies in South Orange, NJ. We will explore issues of skills training, teen/mentor tutoring, family programming, and the integration of a tefilah and thirteen mitzvot component into your curriculum. Participants will also have an opportunity to share successful techniques and experiences.

**Participants:**

Hazzan Perry Fine, South Orange, NJ  
Hazzan Erica Lippitz, South Orange, NJ

**Session B**

**Toledo Room/5th Floor**

Chair: Hazzan Martin Leubitz, Rochester, NY

**Cantors and Technology**

"How To" become a computer *mayvin*. How we can use music transcription, arrangement and transposition by computer so that our tasks will become easier and even enjoyable.

**Presented by:**

Hazzan David Propis, Houston, TX

**Session C**

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

Chair: Hazzan Toby Lou Hayman, Chicago, IL

**Sing Your Heart Out! New Repertoire for the Volunteer Choir.**

Linda Hirschhorn's songs and rounds draw upon traditional and contemporary texts (including Marcia Falk's liturgy), are intricately woven into two, three and four part harmonies and blend modern insight with ancient wisdom. The repertoire includes some new settings of



## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 28**

traditional songs as well as original songs of healing, songs for Rosh Hodesh, blessings for our children and other life cycle rituals and reflect concerns for peace, compassion and Tikun Olam.

The use of drones, close harmonies and counterpoint makes this music gratifying to the most experienced of singers yet accessible to the beginning volunteer.

**Presented by:**

Hazzan Linda Hirschhorn, San Leandro, CA

**3:30 P.M.**

**Let Us Never Forget These Favorites**

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

**A Melodic Bridge to the 21st Century**

A sing-through of congregational tunes known and sung all over the world for the last fifty years. Oldies but goodies, followed by some of the more popular new melodies which will escort us into the 21st century. A wonderful opportunity for Hazzanim of all ages to get a collection of old favorites no longer in print and newer tunes culled from different sources.

**Presented by:**

Hazzan Robert Kieval, Rockville, MD; Friends and Audience

**Accompanist:**

Sonia Kass

**4:30 P.M.**

**Free time**

**5:15 P.M.**

**ערביה**

**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**

**בעל תפלה: Hazzan Roger Weisberg, Long Grove, IL**

## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 28**

### **Memorial to Departed Colleagues**

**הספָּדָה וְהַכְּרִיה:**

**Hazzan Jack Chomsky, Columbus, OH**

**6:00 P.M.**

**Dinner**

**Ballroom of the Americas/Lobby Floor**

**Chair: Hazzan Joseph Gole, Los Angeles, CA**

### **Presentation of Scholarship Plaque Awards**

**הַבָּה נְשִׁיר בְּרַכְתַּה המזון** and **Hazzanim Sheldon**

**Levin, Philadelphia, PA; Judith Naimark,**

**Wilmington, DE**

**הַפְּנִימִית הַעֲמָדָה:** Hazzan Roger Weisberg, Long Grove, IL

### **Presentation of Kavod Award to Lenny Wasser**

**7:30 P.M.**

**Grand Ballroom/7th Floor**

**In Tribute to the Memory of the Great Hazzanim  
of Chicago: "A Personal Memoir"**

**Hazzan David Brandhander, Chicago, IL**

### **Concert: "The Chicago Cantorial Tradition"**

**Participants: Hazzanim Rebecca Carmi, Palm  
Desert, CA; David Feuer, Palm Beach, FL; Shelly  
Kaszynski, Chicago, IL; Abraham Lubin,  
Bethesda, MD; Jacob Mendelson, White Plains,  
NY; Alberto Mizrahi, Chicago, IL; Jeffrey Nadel,  
Washington, DC; Howard Nevison, New York,  
NY; David Propis, Houston, TX; Ephraim Sapir,  
Willowdale, Ontario, Canada; Shlomo Shuster,  
Skokie, IL; Cory Winter, Glenview, IL; The  
Chicago Children's Chorus, William Chin, Music  
Director and the Anshe Emet Festival Choir, Alan  
Heatherington, Music Director.**

### **Presentation of President's Plaque to**

**Hazzan Abraham Lubin**



## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 28**

Presenter: Hazzan Solomon Mendelson

Welcome: Danny Newman, Chicago Lyric  
Opera Company  
Chorus conducted by Matthew Lazar  
Accompanist: Tova Morcos

**11:00 P.M.**  
**Promenade Concert**  
**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**  
Master of Ceremonies: Hazzanim Jacob  
Mendelson, White Plains, NY and  
Nathan Lam, Los Angeles, CA

## **THURSDAY, MAY 29**

**7:15 A.M.**  
**שחרית**  
**Egalitarian**  
**King Arthur Court/3rd Floor**  
**בעל תפלה:** Hazzan Carol Chesler, Malverne, NY  
**בעל קריאה:** Hazzan Daniel Green, Toms River, NJ

**שחרית**  
**Traditional**  
**Renaissance Room/5th Floor**  
**בעל תפלה:** Hazzan Larry Vieder,  
Farmington Hills, MI  
**בעל קריאה:** Hazzan Nathaniel Schudrich,  
Rockville, MD

**8:30 A.M.**  
**Farewell Breakfast**  
**Grand Ballroom/7th Floor**

**Breakfast Meeting**  
**Mission Statement Committee**  
**Empire Room/7th Floor**

**10:00 A.M.**  
**Meeting of the Executive Council**  
**King Arthur Court/3rd Floor**

## **Akiva Zimmerman Remembers**

**Akiva Zimmerman  
Chair: Hazzan Eric Wasser**

*Hazzan Eric Wasser:*

It is certainly my great honor and privilege to present a familiar face to many of you - Akiva Zimmerman, who is here to share with us some wonderful stories and anecdotes and histories pertaining to the first meeting of the Kantoren Verein in Vienna, and who is as you know a very well-honored man. He has received many awards from the Cantors Assembly and from numerous other institutions in Israel. This past November he was honored on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday at a special service at the Tel Aviv Great Synagogue where there were over a thousand people present including the Chief Rabbi of Israel, and a special maariv service was held at that time. He has received the Kavod Award as well as the Am HaSefer Award from the Cantors Assembly and he is soon to receive the Beit Shalom Aleichem Prize in Israel as well. We welcome him to Chicago and I know we all look forward to hearing his remarks.

*Akiva Zimmerman:*

It is customary in Jewish life before celebrating a simhah like a wedding or a bar-mitzvah, that a Jew invites his late parents, grandparents and other relatives to take part in his simhah. This convention is a special convention in the life of the Cantors Assembly, the biggest and the most active cantors' association. The slogan of this year's convention is: *vekidashtem et shnat hahamishim shanah*, which means: this year is the holy year for the Cantors Assembly, a year of kedushah vesimhah. Even though late members and founders of the Assembly are not with us physically, their spirit is leading us in this Jubilee convention, and I invite spiritually the *anshei bereishit*, the people who created the Assembly, to be with us. A week before Sam Rosenbaum *zikhrono livrakha* died I wrote him a letter and told him that I am going to speak at this convention about the first cantors association in the world. I don't know if he received my letter. *Yihyeh zikhro barukh.*

In past conventions, I lectured before you about cantors of the past. Today I will dedicate my lecture to a cantors association of the past, the mother of all cantors organizations in the world. I was asked what I think about the cantorate in the year 2000. My answer is that I am busy with the cantorate of 1900. I am a historian not a prophet. Yet young cantors have to know what a golden chain they continue. A hazzan has to know not only *da lifnei mi ata omed* (know before whom you are standing) but also *da mi amad lefanekha* (know who stood before you).

The first cantors organization was founded in Vienna in 1881 by Salomon Sulzer in his home. The organization was called Die Oesterreich-Ungarischer Kantoren Verein. Let me examine with you what was the status of a hazzan in those days in Europe and even here in America. I said 'status' but, dear friends, you have to know that the status of a hazzan was no status at all. The hazzan was like an *eved kanaani*, a Canaanite slave. Even here in America there were some hazzanim who were leading cantors, but most of the hazzanim were without status at all. This was changed here in America when the Cantors Assembly started its activities. The hazzan in America had no status with the government of the U.S.A. Even the great



Moshe Koussevitsky could not enter America as a hazzan. In my collection I have his Polish passport and documents showing that his profession was changed to 'Rabbi' so that he could enter America. The same was with the great Leib Glantz. Next year is his hundredth anniversary and I hope the Cantors Assembly will mark this date. It occurs in June, when the convention will be. Leib Glantz entered America also as a Rabbi - I have a document that says, 'This man is now a Rabbi'! Such was the status of the hazzan here in America.

When Sulzer founded the Austro-Hungarian Cantors Association, the aim was to set standards and qualifications for the cantorate in all its aspects, to publish Jewish music, support cantorial schools, to ensure economic security for old cantors - *al tashlikheinu le-eit zikna* - and to create a spirit of fraternity among the cantors. Let us have a look at contracts of cantors in Europe in those days.

We learn from these contracts that a hazzan had only duties, no rights at all. But on the other hand, this is very important, we again find that those days were the golden days of the creativity of hazzanut. The non-status of the hazzan did not disturb hazzanut as a vital art. The fact is that in those days every synagogue, big or small, had a hazzan or a baal tefilah who was familiar with nusah and local traditions. And why was the first cantors association founded in Vienna? In those days Austria was the biggest country in Europe. The Kaiser of Austria ruled over Hungary - one of his titles was King of Hungary. He was also King of Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slovenia, Galicia, Lodomeria, Illyria - and also King of Jerusalem! That was one of the titles of the Kaiser! Years ago I met in Vienna a Princess of the Hapsburg dynasty, which ruled Austria until 1917. She converted, and her Hebrew name is Sarah Shlom-Tziyon Hapsburg-Lottringen, to recall the name of the Jewish Queen Shlom-Tziyon, the wife of Jannai Alexander. Cantors from all over this huge Austrian kingdom were organized into this association which was ruled by the cantors of Vienna. Another reason why cantors came to Vienna was Salomon Sulzer. The cantors wanted to study with Sulzer, who was recognized as the father of modern hazzanut. Minkowsky, in his work *Pirkei Hayyay*, describes in Hebrew how he came to Vienna and studied with Sulzer - even the great Minkowsky.

Looking over contracts with hazzanim, we can learn about the poor status the cantors had - if they had a status. In front of me is a contract with Hazzan Shlomo Lifshitz, 1675-1758. This is a copy of the contract that is in my book *Beron Yachad*. He served the congregation of Metz from 1715 to 1758, together with a hazzan sheni named David. They had a common contract - maybe paper was expensive in those days so they had a common contract for both hazzanim! The contract emphasized that the cantors were obliged to come to the synagogue every day before the service started. That is reasonable - but look! If they come late even by one minute - that is written in the contract - they will be punished with a penalty of 1.3 Reichsthaler. The salary of the hazzanim was 200 Rth for the Chief Cantor and 100 Rth for the hazzan sheni. So if he is late a hundred minutes a year he loses all his salary! I hope there are no gabboim here to hear this type of contract! The contract was signed for two years and the cantors had no right to receive donations from the congregation. It is written: "Without any excuse" - that means the cantor has no right to get anything for a wedding, a levayah (*lo aleinu*), a bar mitzvah.

Look what poor status! In the first year, the cantors were not permitted to leave the country at all, and in the second year, only when all the members of the community agreed. I am

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60 years old, and until now I have not seen a community where all the members would agree on something! The contracts include twenty-six lines. Twenty-four of them deal with the duties of the hazzan, only two lines deal with rights. One of the privileges of the community was to hire other hazzanim without asking these two hazzanim.

Another contract, from 1778 with a cantor named Joseph from Germany, obliged the cantor to pay for the choir, and the community had to pay only fifty per cent of the salary of the bass - maybe a bass doesn't eat too much! The cantor had also to pay for the food of the choir, and the community had to supply nourishment only for the bass - so the other choir people maybe went hungry!

Let us have a look at a contract with a cantor from east Europe - the famous Yerucham Blindman, known as Yerucham Hakatan, "The Tiny Yerucham", 1798 - 1891, who served in the community of Berditchev. Here in my second book I brought his contract - also a very interesting contract. Even this contract with Yerucham Hakatan, the famous hazzan and composer, includes more duties than privileges. He is obliged to officiate in services at the Great Synagogue for musaf Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Kol Nidrei, Neila, Hoshana Rabbah, the Three Festivals, the first day of Selihot, the Four Parshiyot (Shekalim, Zakhor, Parah and Hahodesh), and every shabbat on which the new moon is blessed; Shabbat Rosh Hodesh, Shabbat Hanukah, Shabbat Nahamu; candle-lighting on the first night of Hanukah in the Great Synagogue and every night at another synagogue in the town. We find also a list of which synagogue he has to officiate in when he is free from duties in the Great Synagogue. He had to sing at brit mila, weddings, funerals, etc. In short, he had a full-time job. His wages are the sum of twenty roubles a week. The congregation is responsible for only six roubles and the other fourteen roubles are to come from the collection box! So the hazzan has to be a shnorrer and collect money - and this was the great Yerucham Hakatan! But with this bad contract he was one of the creators of hazzanut and he lived a hundred years.

The lowly status of hazzanim is discussed also in the responsa. You have to know that most cantors in those days had no contract at all. A cantor can go to sleep at night as a cantor with a position, and when he comes to shul in the morning it could be announced that he has to look for another job.

Zavel Kwartin married into a merchant family. His father-in-law refused to allow him to become a hazzan - he told him, "What, a hazzan - a beggar in our family? My son in-law should go around to brits, weddings, pidyon ha-ben, yahrzeits, delivering Mi Shebeirachs and El Maleis - and then stretching out his hand as a beggar so that maybe someone will feel sorry and throw him some pennies?" So Kwartin describes it in his book *Mayn Lebn*, which Mark Slobin translated in his book *Chosen Voices*.

In *Yarchon Hehazzanim*, the newspaper that was published one hundred years ago in Hebrew in Czestachowa by Cantor Abraham Ber Birnbaum we find how poor was the situation of hazzanim. Birnbaum offered to create a foundation which would support all cantors who lost their jobs and could not find a new one. This was the situation when the Cantors Association in Vienna was founded. The status of a cantor in Vienna was better than in other countries. I paid a lot of money to get these calendars from Vienna of a hundred years ago - I paid \$20 for every calendar. You can find a list of all the hazzanim from the whole Austrian monarchy. In one synagogue in Vienna you have five cantors - Oberkantor, Zweiterkantor,



Stellvertreterkantor, Gehilfskantor, and - Kantor. Then a very interesting list - who was hazzan in Budapest, who was in Lemberg... This little book is a source of information not only about the cantorate. I am researching also about the Jewish Press in the world - here you can find a list of all the Jewish newspapers there were in the Austrian Empire.

The influence of Sulzer was taken over by Russia and America, and hazzanim from all over the world came to Vienna as I told you, to study with Sulzer. After Sulzer died, many cantorial schools were founded in Vienna, which until 1938 supplied hazzanim for all the Jewish world. Here I have made a list, I am not sure that it is complete, of cantors that were in Vienna or studied in Vienna and came here to America. I will read you the list:

The famous Pinya Minkowsky, the famous Zavel Kwartin, Jacob Schwartz who was cantor in Bnai Jeshurun and then was chairman of the Hazzanim Farband here in America - he was also a member of the Cantors Assembly; Cantor Ephraim Spivak. Here before me is one of the Past Presidents of the Cantors Assembly, *le-orekh yamim veshanim*, Chaim Gershon Gregor Shelkan. Cantor Yehudah Mandel of blessed memory, he was a student of Leibish Miller. Last week was the fiftieth anniversary of Leibush Miller - I spoke with his son and grandchild living in Israel. Then Cantor Abraham David Feuer and his son Yosef Feuer; Cantor Shmuel Baruch Taube now in Israel; the last choir leader of the Seitenstetten Temple, Dr Frederick Fuchsgebl; the famous cantor and opera singer Don Fuchs; Cantor Yosef Morgenstern (Hashachar), one of the most famous cantors here in America; Cantor Alexander Goldreich; Cantor Naftali Hertz Gershon Margolis, a member of the Cantors Assembly, brother-in-law of Don Fuchs; Cantor Isidor Eddelsman: the famous Cantor Israel Alter - his nephew is here with us, Cantor Benjamin Maissner from Toronto; the choir leader of Alter, David Raisenman, the father of Bob Raisenman; Cantor Naftali Unger; Cantor Shmuel Postoloff of Milner Temple; Cantor Shimon Weiss; the famous cantor and composer Shlomo Ancis -I have a very nice document in my collection: Shlomo Ancis published music and wrote to Professor Albert Einstein and asked him to buy his music so that he could say Einstein bought his music! I don't know what Einstein answered to Ancis. Cantor Marcus Ehrlich, today in Lawrence; Cantor Abraham Brun - and let us pray for a refuah shleima for him; Cantor Shlomo Zalman Schweid, today in Forest Hills; Cantor Arthur Unterberg; Professor Solomon Braslavsky, the choir leader and musical director of Mishkan Tefillah - you know, on the first record of Glantz, *Shema Yisrael* and *Tal*, Solomon Braslavsky is the accompanist. He was from Uman - I think he lived approximately one hundred years. The famous Cantor Bogczester was also from Vienna; the two brothers Morris and Shlomo Goldstein; Cantor Asher Goldenberg from Manhattan; Cantor Yosef Giblichman here from Chicago; Cantor Naftali Orenstein; Cantor Chaim Wollfisch; the famous Joshua Wieder; Cantor Yakov Sonnenklar, member of the Cantors Assembly; Cantor Meir Seifert; Cantor Yehuda Taler; Cantor Yitzhak Prager; the famous Shalom Katz; Cantor Abraham Martin; Cantor Karel Newman; Cantor Ephraim Spivak; one of the leading figures of the Reform cantorate, Alois Kaiser; Cantor Shlomo Kreitstein; Cantor Ephraim Rotenberg from Chicago; Cantor Ephraim Fishel Rosenberg - he was the Chairman of the Cantors Association in Israel, and I am glad that another chairman is here with us, Cantor Shabtai Ackerman, *af lange yorn*, with his dear wife Dora; Cantor Yechiel Rosen; Cantor Yosef Stark; the famous Cantor Ephraim Shlepak - he davened in the circus in Vienna, where there were 3000 people attending services. His grandchild lives in Jerusalem, Professor Mordechai

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Nissan- he gave me music and documents of his grandfather, I published them in my book *Shaarei Ron*.

Cantor Mordechai Matyas Polak, one of the founders of the Hazzanim Farband here in America; Cantor Tukonogy Aron here in Chicago; the Chief Cantor of the Seitenstetten Temple, Cantor Abraham Adler, also a member of the Cantors Assembly, and the cantor today in the Seitenstetten Temple, Cantor Shmuel Barzilai, also a member of the Cantors Assembly.

I am sure that there were more cantors from Vienna and the Vienna school here in America that I didn't mention. It is very interesting that many cantors of the Vienna school were chairmen of Cantors Associations. Leibush Miller and Benjamin Unger were chairmen of the Cantors Association in Israel; Cantor Zvi Mayerovitch was chairman in England, he was at the Milner Temple in Vienna; Cantors Jacob Schwartz and Ephraim Spivak were chaimen of the Hazzanim Farband; and I mentioned Cantors Ephraim Rosenberg, Gregor Shelkan and Yehuda Mandel.

And then famous opera singers started their career in the synagogues of Vienna: Joseph Schwartz; Herman Yablovker; Max Lichtig, if you know his name - his real name was Munio Lichtman. There were three friends, Benjamin Unger, Dino (David) Halperin, and Lichtig. They were three children who sang in the choir in the Polisher Shul with the famous Cantor Emanuel Frankel. And there was the famous Don Fuchs.

The first Chairman of the Oesterreich-Ungarischer Kantoren Verein was the famous cantor and scholar Josef Singer, the successor of Sulzer in the Seitenstetten Temple. He founded the *Kantoren Zeitung* in 1881 with the famous cantor Yakov Bauer, the brother-in-law of the famous painter Isidor Kaufman, as editor. In the first year this was a weekly, and later until 1899 it appeared only three times a month. Today, for the Cantors Assembly in America it is difficult to publish two times a year! From 1899 till 1912 the newspaper was published as a supplement to *Die Wahrheit*. From 1912 until March 1938 it was part of *Die Wahrheit*. A collection of the *Kantoren Zeitung* exists in the library of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

The *Kantoren Zeitung* is a rare source of cantorial information - a list of positions, music, articles about hazzanut and Jewish music. The *Zeitung* until 1920 is in gothic letters so it is very difficult for me to read all these articles. Until 1938 Vienna was the cradle and centre of hazzanut all over the world, so you can find very interesting information about what is going on in cantorial life all over the world. After the First World War Austria lost her Empire, but from the cantorial point of view there was no change until 1938. One of the articles in the *Zeitung* from December 1894 deals with the problem of how to teach schoolchildren to understand the prayers and how to conduct services. A famous Israeli journalist, Shalom Rosenfeld, says there is no anachronism like yesterday's newspaper, but there is nothing as up-to-date as the newspaper of the day before yesterday. You have here problems with students in Camp Ramah. In Israel we have problems with yeshivah students, with students from Bnei Akiva that don't know how to pray. In Vienna in 1894 in a journal article, someone named Israel Singer deals with this problem - how to teach students how to pray.

I looked over part of this journal when I was in Vienna, and I learned that the situation of the Kantoren Verein was very good. I have here the balance for the year 1895. The income for the year was 1503 florins. This includes a donation from Baron Rothschild of 500fl, membership



fees 355fl, and from property 353 fl. The expenses included a donation the Verein gave to a chazzan's widow of 200fl, and 100fl donation to the *Kantoren Zeitung*. The balance shows 462 fl in the bank after all expenses. I think this is better than the Cantors Assembly today which has \$18,000 deficit! The balance shows that the Verein owns property of 9120 fl - a lot of money. The Jewish community of Vienna was one of the richest Jewish communities in the world. They had many properties in the Second District and today they have got back their property. I ask why the Cantors Assembly doesn't claim for donations because as the greatest cantors association in the world I think they should make a claim like Jews from all over the world after the Holocaust.

The chazzanim in Vienna had weekly meetings to discuss problems and to sing new and old compositions. I met in London a Jew named Shlomo Barshak. His father had the famous Barshak restaurant and hotel in Vienna, and the hazzanim used to meet there. This man is today more than sixty, and he was then seven years old. He cannot forget - it was 1938, the late Moshe Koussevitsky came to Vienna to conduct the memorial service for the Rabbi of Vienna, Prof. Tzvi Peretz Chajes obm, one of the great Jewish scholars. Moshe Koussevitsky stayed in this hotel, and he davened a shabbat with Josef Millet's choir - I think it was in the Niederger Temple. Simcha, David and Jacob came from London to stay with Moshe on shabbat. This man said "I was then seven years old, and I cannot forget the kiddush Moshe Koussevitsky made in the hotel - his brothers supported him, and then they sang zmirot until the early morning."

This was the situation up to 1938 when in one night all the synagogues in Germany and Austria were destroyed - the Kristallnacht. All the synagogues were burnt except for one, the Seitenstetten Temple - it was so built that if they destroyed it they would destroy the whole street. This synagogue exists today and there is still there today the tradition of Sulzer - there is a choir even on shacharit Yomim Nora'im, and every week a choir. The hazzanim of Vienna remained without synagogues and without positions. I have some newspaper articles about the tragedy and letters from hazzanim that were sent all over the world requesting documents so that they could get out of Vienna. Here is a rare letter - I got it from Mr Yakov Koren, he is the son of the late Cantor Asher Koren of Vienna and later Tel Aviv. The famous Cantor Mathias Mathias - I think you know him - he was the Cantor in the Seitenstetten Temple. He wrote a letter on Aug 15 1939, two weeks before the war. This letter he wrote in Hebrew and German - "Rahamana litslan - how terrible is the situation in Vienna..." He tells how the hazzanim have lost their positions, and a sad story about Cantor Emanuel Frankel of the Polisher Shul, and Cantor Feuer in Debling Temple. Cantor Feuer heard about a position in Libau, Latvia. He wanted to take the position but his father told him, "You were as a child in America, so you can enter America, why do you have to go to Latvia?" So he came to America and saved his life. Instead, Cantor Frankel went to Libau and then he was killed with all the Jews there in 1942.

I have an article written in Poland in June 1938. They didn't know that they would have the same fate as Vienna a year later. Some of the hazzanim were lucky and came to Erets Yisrael, some came to America and England. Most of them finished their lives in Auschwitz, Theresienstadt etc. There is a proverb in Latin: *Sic transit gloria mundi* - so perished the glory of the world. The world of the hazzanim of Vienna passed, but their glory will remain for ever.

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I want to show you a rare document from 1924. It is in German and signed by rabbis and cantors together - for the Rabbiner Verband, Dr David Feuchtwang, who was then Chief Rabbi of Vienna, and for the Kantorenverein Isidor Levit, President, and Emanuel Frankel, Secretary. The famous Zionist leader Robert Stricker, *Hashem yinkom damo*, had blamed the hazzanim - he called them "the schnorrers with the Torah in their hands". He blamed them for taking money at funerals, weddings, bar-mitzvahs, and this was published in the Vienna newspapers. So the cantors together with the rabbis - you see, six pages - explained to Stricker why they take money - that is part of their income. They say, "We go to the cemetery when it is snowing or raining" and they describe the situation all over the world, even here in America. Cantor Kurt Silbermann said he will translate it into English and maybe get it published in the *Journal of Synagogue Music*. By the way, I want to correct something that was published there in the last issue. There is part of my book, *The Cantorate in the Responsa of the Rosh* and it says it was written by Aryeh Finkelstein. He translated it, but the article is mine.

Here I have a list of synagogues and cantors in 1938. Here I have a list from 100 years ago of the great community of Vienna. I have a list from 1892 of one hundred kosher restaurants in Vienna! Now I am trying to make a list of the hazzanim of Vienna, called *Beron Ir Vehazzaneha*, in German *Ein Stadt mit Kantoren, Die Geschichte das Kantorat in Wien*. I have a list of 300 cantors - it was very difficult to do this — I go to cemeteries, I have a list of names, I found their dates - very hard work, I hope it will be published one of these days. I did it for the Jewish Museum in Vienna. People in the choir who died are listed, all this I found - the cemetery in Vienna was preserved, you can find Sulzer there. There is a joke in Yiddish, someone said: "Where can I go to hear a good hazzan?" and the reply was, "Gey in drerd arayn!" I am glad to be with you, I wish you all the best, and I hope the tradition of the cantorate in Vienna will not be forgotten.

*Replies to questions:*

Hanoch Avenari describes in his book the history of the Sulzer family. Sulzer had 14 children, and another 2 who died days after they were born. Of the 14, only one was in music, Josef Sulzer. Another son, Jacob, wanted to be a cantor in Vienna, and Sulzer was a tyrant, he wanted him to be a cantor, but they couldn't even teach him the Kaddish. Minkowsky describes this in his *Pirkei Hayay*. Some of Sulzer's daughters married goyim, *lo aleinu*. One of Sulzer's daughters married someone who became an officer in the Nazi German Airforce. (Now they are researching Jewish officers in the Nazi Army.) Hitler *yemach shemo* knew that the wife of one of his great officers was Jewish. I found in a genizah a Pirkei Avot published 1938, dedicated to the Jews in the German Army - so after Hitler came in 1933 there were Jews in the German Army. This son-in-law of Sulzer was one of the officers who rebelled against Hitler in 1944, and he was killed. His wife escaped to Hungary and was killed there. Her daughter Katerina went to Nigeria and today is in London...The family Rabinovitch was a famous family of hazzanim in Latvia. I think A. Z. Idelsohn, was a student of this family....I think another member of the Cantors Assembly was from Libau, that was Cantor Alan Michaelson...

Last year I was in Vilna, the Synagogue where Moshe Koussevitsky started his career, Toharat Hakodesh. Today there are twenty people who come every day to the synagogue, they get a dollar a day so they come for minha and maariv. In Kovno they have a better deal, they get the same dollar, but they only have to come for minhah. That is the tragic situation in Vilna. There



is none who keeps kosher. There are a thousand Jews in Vilna today but makhloikes like for a million...

There were two Rabinovitch brothers, one is in California, one was in Dvinsk....I think Berele Chagy started his career in Dvinsk, then in Riga....

All the Jewish archives of Vienna are partly in the possession of the Jewish community and partly in Jerusalem. You can find every document - my grandfather who I am named after was from Galicia but came to Vienna when he was six, and died there in 1917. I found his grave in the cemetery, they have the documents saying what part of the cemetery he is buried in - the cemetery in Vienna is a town, one of the biggest cemeteries in the world, it was not destroyed because it is mutual to Jews and non-Jews. There are very interesting matsevot there..

In Poland nothing survived. Some of the material may be hidden until today - there is the Historical Institute with documents of Ringelblum, but most documents were destroyed...

The Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur said, "There is more written than I have declared" ..I could speak for days and days, so thank you again.

## **Maximizing Your Retirement Investments: Preparing For The Future**

**Nina Rone CPA**

**Chair: Hazzan Abraham Shapiro, Lynbrook, NY**

*Hazzan Abraham Shapiro:*

Whether you are retired or facing retirement, it is never, believe me, too early to begin planning. There are no publications on this subject by any group in the Conservative Movement. There is one text that the Reform group has published, called *Life Begins at Forty*, probably still available through the CCAR. I have a strong caveat at the outset: full, proper and effective financial preparation must be made in advance to ensure retirement joy and satisfaction. I want to emphasize the crucial nature of the economics of retirement as essential and imperative. In this regard there are basically two aims and conditions for our preparation: we must attempt to provide an income as near as possible to that which we achieved during the last productive years in the active cantorate. We cannot expect our retirement to be identical, but we must approach or approximate it, and such an expectation is the ceiling. The floor level is to provide sufficiently so that the prayer we voice in birkat hamazon each day will be realized: *al tatsrikheinu lo lidei matnat basar vadam....* Preparation for retirement is really driven to forge an income base that, as our forebears put it, *keynmol zol men nisht kumen tsu di kinder*. With this in mind, I'd like to introduce to you Nina Rone, our Administrator of the Joint Retirement Board, who is a CPA and a Registered Investment Advisor. Her professional goals are to assist families in understanding the relationship between present investing and future security. She is the wife of Rabbi Yaakov Rone, the mother of three adults all of whom have retirement accounts. Her lecture deals with the specifics of allocating assets within the Joint Retirement Board program.

*Nina Rone:*

First of all, I beg you to take advantage of the times that I may be visiting your region - we were in Chicago and I don't think one cantor signed for an appointment or came to our seminar. I try to blanket the region with flyers so that you know I'm coming, I spend a few days so that you can make personal appointments. Come with your spouse - in New York we hold seminars in the Board Room, but we go around the country and I try to visit as many regions as possible.

Just to give you an idea, is anyone here about twenty years from retirement? Would you consider yourself an aggressive, moderate or conservative investor? If you are moderate-to-aggressive, you should have a retirement fund today that is equal to between 193% and 268% of your current income.

Is anyone ten years from retirement? If you are a moderate investor, you should have a retirement fund equal to 558%, or five and a half times your current income. This is telling you in real numbers what you heard in the introduction...

The retirement fund doesn't have to be one fund, but it should be all of your liquid savings - not your home...

The percentages are percentages of your gross - you still have to pay taxes on your income



when you retire - when you make a withdrawal from your retirement plan, that's regular taxable income when you retire.

If you are five years from retirement, and an aggressive investor, you should have 675% saved. If you're conservative, say you've only invested in GRACs (Guaranteed Return Annuity Contract), you should have 890%, that's basically nine times your current income in savings. I didn't do these figures but I'm sure they allow for inflation. They come from the *Wall Street Journal* and were prepared by T. Rowe Price Associates.

If a person is invested 100% in GRACs the rate of expected return is 6.25%. If that same person was 100% invested in Equity Mutual Funds the rate of return I am calculating is 12.5%. That's an enormous difference over time, and it doubles as the years go on.

Let's do a dictionary. What's a stock? A share in a company. What's a bond? An obligation of a company. So when you buy a bond you're buying debt, when you buy a stock you're buying ownership or, another word, equity. What's a mutual fund? A package of stocks or bonds or both.

What is interest? You only earn it on a bond, not on a stock. What do you get on stock? Dividends. Are dividends guaranteed? No. What else do you get on stock? Capital appreciation. From a stock we expect both, but if there are no dividends then we expect a lot of capital appreciation. Guess a stock that might pay a lot of capital appreciation but little or no dividends? Intel...Berkshire Hathaway...this is the investment stock company that's owned by Warren Buffet...it's worth \$42,000 a share ..that's how the money was made that's being donated to the Seminary.

The first page of the package that accompanies this talk shows the different types of investors and investment accounts. We've labeled them for time of life and disposition, for example an investor in retirement and with low risk-tolerance.

There are different colors on the sheet we have prepared- the blue blocks are stable-value investments like bank accounts, CDs, Treasuries...in our fund GRACs are the stable-value investment. Then we have general-safety income which includes other investments that are considered fixed - in our fund it would be bonds, bond mutual funds. Even though they are more volatile than they used to be and than we expected, they are still in that group. The yellow block is growth and income - more than any other color on this chart, this is an important element for every investor. What do we mean by growth and income in terms of investment? It's pretty conservative in the realm of equity investments. A true growth and income account invests in a particular way. They buy kind of blue-chip companies - not the high-tech. They pay very steady dividends. In fact the Scudder Growth and Income Fund, the purest growth and income fund you can get, sets a certain floor that's very high for the stocks they buy. Those companies have to have a certain growth rate over a long period of time, and they have to have a certain dividend history. They can't say, I'm going to pay dividends next year but not the year after - they have to keep paying and increasing a bit over time, with a steady improvement in the company. So even in a year where the stock market may have been hit pretty bad, like in 94 when at the end of the year if you owned individual stocks you'd be showing negatives, they will keep their returns up because they've invested in really strong companies.

The green is pure growth. What are the managers of growth funds buying? Are they looking for dividends as a key factor? No - they are looking for companies with growth potential,

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they're looking at the market share of that company, the competition - they have different priorities to the managers of the Scudder Growth and Income Fund - the leadership of the company, the vision - even how that company acts in relation to current environmental issues. They may have a chemical company that looks like a good play but they're polluting the Niagara River, which portends ill for their future.

There is a category called 'aggressive' but it says 'alternative' in the description. 'Aggressive' wasn't a very good term - there is a better term, 'alternative'. In the alternative investment group we have two categories that are very important investments. One category is smaller companies. They might be included in a growth fund. The other is a global element. The experts are telling us it's very important to have global investments - at least 10% of your portfolio. In looking at the recent history of some global sectors they have done better than our domestic sector, but as a group that's not necessarily so. In our plan we have only two global funds. We don't have a Europe Fund or a Latin America Fund because we as a Board tend to avoid anything that's too narrow in focus because we can't offer you a hundred things. Global investments are still expected to be a good play because they tend to run opposite to our own equity markets so it's kind of a hedge as well. Remember though - Procter and Gamble for example, which is very likely to be included in either one of these groups, growth-and-income or growth - how much of their business do you think they do overseas? With other companies it's 80%, so I wouldn't be surprised if it's 80%. Now they're selling shampoo in China, the Chinese never had commercial shampoo before. There are so many untapped markets for those kind of personal-care products - Coca-Cola and those things. The stability of the government is a factor, and the currency translation.

*Question from the floor:*

I recently bought a Scudder Emerging Market Income Fund - it lends money to Brazil, Argentina, they've been doing pretty good. What category would that be ?

*Nina Rone:*

That's more of an income fund, more of an international bond fund, alternative. Remember, not all mutual funds are alike even when they have the same objective - they are still run by different managers.

The next page of the package shows you how the investments that are available in our program break down into these categories. In this pie chart you can apply whatever is your own investment profile and fit the various investments into that scheme. Here we chose the moderate-aggressive investor as a sample - 35% invested in growth and in the green are listed various growth investments. The GRACs are in the blue safety-income group.

Scudder is not one investment, it's a company, like Fidelity is a company. Those companies manage various Mutual Funds. Who owns a Mutual Fund, who owns the Scudder Growth and Income Fund? We do. We read in the paper a few weeks ago that Scudder was for sale - what was it, \$8 billion, \$80 billion..? Then we found out it was a rumor, Scudder wasn't for sale. One of their Principals explained that any good company is always out in the market place, available to the right suitor. Twenty suitors were interviewed and none of them met the criteria.

There are no restrictions on these investments. You can have all or part of your money in any



single one of these investments. Two years ago the Board took off all restrictions. There's one investment that is restricted, not in terms of percentage but in moving it whenever you want to - the GRACs. The GRACs mature at the end of each year. At that time you decide what you want to do with that money, whether you want to reinvest it in a GRAC, or anything else. There is no time limit to do this. There used to be an automatic re-investment, but now you must tell us what to do with it. We let you know in November that this money is coming available, so please tell us what you want to do with it.

You have always paid a management fee to us. We did not institute it last year. This is how we pay our salaries. This is the same as your congregation charging dues to pay your salary. The expenses of the Joint Retirement Board are paid by a fee that we collect on every dollar that's invested in our plan every year. It will continue to be paid - that's our income. We don't earn any commission on your investments. The new thing last year was that in order to bring Separate Account B into line with all our other investments we started to charge for it the same way, rather than a commission, a front-end load that was originally charged - first it was 6%, then it was 3%. So we collect 35 basis points, which is the equivalent of 35 hundredths of one per cent. For every single dollar that is invested in our plan we collect 35 basis points.

Money that is in a retirement account is totally different from money in other investments. In other investments your dividend is taxable, interest is taxable. In a Mutual Fund your Capital Gains distributions are taxable. In a retirement account, even though you are collecting dividends and interest, they are all tax-deferred until you withdraw them. When you withdraw them they do not have the characteristics any more of investment income - they are just regular income, and it is taxable.

Let's say you own stock in IBM. The day before IBM pays its dividend it's worth \$150, and it's going to pay a dividend of \$2. The next day your share of stock is worth \$148 because IBM wrote you a cheque for \$2, but the market place pushes the stock back up to \$150 in a couple of days. The Stock Exchange has to reduce the value of the share on the day the dividend is theoretically paid to the shareholder, but this has no impact on a retirement account.

What is Mutual of America - a Mutual Fund? No. It's an insurance company. It's a cash account. It pays currently 5.5% interest. It's different from a GRAC in that it can be moved at any time.

What's in the Scudder Money Market Fund? Cash. It pays around 4.5%. Do we offer this as a real investment? No. It's holding. If you're really investing only for safety, you should be in GRACs. If you have a GRAC maturity and you want to invest it slowly, not all at one time in stocks, to invest it over the course of a year, then use the money market account, and you call up every month and say for example, "Transfer 10% to global."

Why would you have something in the Scudder Money Market as opposed to Mutual of America?

If you call Scudder and tell them to transfer to the growth and income they'll do it within 24 hours. If you have money in Mutual of America, you have to call our office, get a form in the mail, fill it out, send it back to us, we send it to Mutual of America, and Lilian in our office phones them up week after week and says "Where's Cantor Shmerel's money?" This takes two or three weeks and you may have lost the opportunity you wanted to have. The Mutual of America account may have outlived its usefulness for us, now we have the Scudder and

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Fidelity places. Before, it was the only place that you could have cash that wasn't tied up in time.

Next we have the Scudder Short-term Bond Fund. It has good quality bonds. The same is true of the Fidelity Fund. There is no difference between Scudder and Fidelity.

The alternative investments (in red on the chart): We have small-company funds here and global funds. Magellan is in that group because although it is a growth fund, its current problems put it in a category apart from other growth funds. Magellan is already recovering from its hits of the past year and a half but to me until it becomes itself again I want to consider it an alternative investment for new money. I'm not encouraging anybody to sell their Magellan at a loss, but before you put new money into it consider the other choices.

The Scudder Development Fund is our riskiest fund. It also has made a poor showing in the past two years. I'm kind of disappointed but it is a high-tech fund, and anyone who's interested in small high-tech companies could do well with this over time. It's like the little girl with the little curl right in the middle of her forehead - when it's good it's wonderful, when it's bad it's horrid.

The Scudder Global Fund is a really high quality blue-chip global. They're not investing in Hymie's garment factory in Taiwan. They're investing in Canon, Nestle...

Fidelity Low-Price Stock Fund is a stand-out of a small company fund. Small companies haven't done well in the past couple of years. The manager of that fund is a bargain hunter - he buys things that nobody is aware of.

Fidelity Worldwide may not be as blue-chip as Scudder Global but it has a very good record.

Getting to the green on the chart, the growth fund: if you have been in Separate Account B with CNA, if you stayed in it after the terrible 70's and you stayed with it in the 80's and 90's you were really handsomely rewarded. We have a participant who was out of the fund for 20 years, he wasn't making deposits but he left his money alone. It happened that he was investing 50-50 in Separate Account B and GRACs. In 1982 and getting close to 1990, the parts of the account were about equal. In 1996 the Separate Account B was worth more than twice the GRAC account.

Scudder Large Company Value used to be Scudder Capital Growth. It has had some bad years but it is a good fund. Scudder Value is a new offering, a mid-size-company value-oriented fund. Fidelity Blue-Chip Growth has the most incredible long-term record of any fund. Supposedly it invests in contrary investments, it goes against what other people are doing in the market. Fidelity Puritan is the only one of the Equity Funds that isn't 90 - 95% in stocks, it is about one third invested in bonds. It is not actually a growth and income fund, it's actually a balanced fund, it tries to keep a balance between stocks and bonds in order to keep your returns up and keep your income steady if you are taking income from it.

Would you expect the returns on this Fidelity Puritan Fund to be higher, lower or the same as the returns on CNA Separate Account B? Lower, because the returns on bonds are smaller than the returns on growth stocks. If you owned a portfolio of bonds that you bought individually, what do you think your overall return would be? 5-6% today. If you had some junk bonds in there, maybe 6.5%. If you had a lot of junk bonds you could get 7.5%. So the returns on the Puritan Fund tend to be in the 10-12% range when the returns on the Growth and Income Funds are in the 13-15% range.



The Fidelity Spartan U.S. Equity Index Fund invests in the 500 stocks on the Standard and Poor Index. It should be exactly the same as the S&P 500 Index, with a deduction of about a quarter of a percent for fees.

What happens if a cantor dies before retirement? You must have at least one beneficiary listed on your account, and the beneficiary gets the money. If you have only one beneficiary and they are not living, the laws of the State would apply as to who gets the money. We encourage people to have a succession of contingent beneficiaries so that we don't have to rely on the laws of the State. The beneficiary becomes the account owner with the same rights and obligations of withdrawals and investments, but they can't make deposits, of course.

## **Chicago's Legendary Hazzanim**

**Judith Karzen**

**Conductor, Halevi Choral Society**

**Chair: Hazzan Chaim Najman, Southfield MI**

*Hazzan Najman:* Judith has been director of music at Temple Israel since 1962. Since 1984 she has been the artistic director and conductor of the Halevi Choral Society - the only professional ensemble in the country that is devoted to the performance of Jewish choral music. She is a founding member of the Guild of Temple Musicians, the national organization for Jewish musicians working in synagogue music who are not hazzanim. She is founder, president and editor of the GTM Newsletter, and she has written numerous articles and lectured frequently on Jewish music. She grew up at Anshe Emet Synagogue where she was a protegee of Hazzan Moses Silverman and Erwin Jospe. Her students include numerous hazzanim, rabbis and musicians and singers all over the country.

*Judith Karzen:* This session is conceived so that you will experience music of Chicago musicians, cantors and composers, and also experience a little of the people who make music in Chicago.

The first thing I want to do is introduce two very active and wonderful musicians in Chicago: Cantor Richard Cohn, the cantor of North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe, and Hans Wurman at the piano, who has been choir director of several large congregations, and who is a composer and pianist. They have put together this program, giving each composer 6.5 minutes.

*Richard Cohn:* You'll hear excerpts from two works: The first and the third are from a service *Avodah BeShirah* for cantor, unison choir, string quartet and harp composed by Mr Wurman with the intent of creating a continuity of worship experience similar to that created by nusah, but it's not specifically a nusah-based composition. The music lends itself both to concert and presentation in services themselves. The first selection is *Shalom Rav...*

The next selection is from a drama in music called *Moses at the Jordan*. The text is by a local writer, Jonathan Abarbanel, the music by Mr Wurman. This is an existential commentary on the predicament of Moses, his inability to lead the Jewish people to the Promised Land. It's a half-hour work for string quartet and harp. The episodes vary from poignant to humorous, and the ultimate message is that God somehow communicates both through love and through justice, and there is something in Moses' experience of both...

*Ms. Karzen:* The next composer is Erwin Jospe. He was born in Breslau in 1907. He came to this country in 1937 after a great career both as a secular musician and in synagogue music. He was descended from several generations of hazzanim on both sides, and his brother was the director of the National Hillel Foundation. When he came to this country, Abraham Binder arranged for Jospe to play in concerts in New York. He would come to Carnegie Hall in the cab that he drove, change into his tux in the men's room, play his concert, then change and drive his cab again. In 1938 he became music director of Fairmount Temple with the help of Binder, and was there till 1946 when he came to Anshe Emet, where he was music director with Moe Silverman. Music with the two of them was a most exciting experience. One of his solo hazzanut pieces *Vehaya Bayom Hahu* will be sung on one of the concert programs. I



would like to sing with you his setting of *Ani Maamin*, which I believe is one of the most magnificent choral compositions and the most moving setting. To me, you hear the words on the wind - the people are gone but the words are still on the wind, and every time the words *bevi-at hamashiah* come back, it's like a breath of sunshine...

A piece that is written well happens immediately, you don't have to do anything to it. Anything written by Irwin Jospe is written well - it's colorful, after twenty years it's just as fresh. These compositions are available through Transcontinental Publications.

The next cantor is Todros Greenberg. He was a wonderful little man who brought such magnificent music to Chicago. He was like a vessel full of tunes, one tune kept pouring out after another. Jerry Frazes will sing *Mizmor Shir*, which is also available in a choral arrangement. Jerry is cantor at Bnei Torah in Highland Park, and is accompanied by his very talented choir director and organist Sonia Kass.

*Hazzan Frazes:* Tody Greenberg was the brightest man I met in my life. When you asked him about something he wrote he would tell you, "I must be very *hhonest*, you see I *hold* it somewhere." There were other talented hazzanim in Chicago, if you asked them, "How did you get to write such a beautiful nign?" they would say, "Well, I got up in the middle of the night, I had a brainstorm, it came to me.." But Tody said, "I *hold* it somewhere..."

*Ms. Karzen:* What we are and what we do is not only Jewish music, but we are, whether we realize it or not, the vessels through which our tradition passes for yet one more generation; and those people that are exposed to us, children in school, congregants, people we teach - all are influenced by who we are and what we bring to what we do. Here in Chicago we had such a rich treasure trove of experience that all of us who grew up here and are doing our jobs here feel this every time we get up in front of anyone.

The next composer is the cantor emeritus of Temple Emanuel, a treasure trove of Chicago music history and Jewish music history - start him talking and you will be absolutely fascinated - Cantor Robert Handwerger, who will conduct us in his *Kedushah*.

*Hazzan Handwerger:* I was cantor of Emanuel Congregation for 43 years, but I started when I was five and a half, so my background has always been in traditional music. As a result, I take out of my background what I can remember, so the music I write is in a traditional style...

*Ms. Karzen:* Sholom Kalib has done a tremendous job arranging a lot of the music of Todros Greenberg, but he also is a wonderful composer in his own right. If I wanted to characterize him I could say he has such a marvellous flair for bringing out the tradition and surprising you with a lovely tune constantly. He understands the voice, the chorus, the prayers and the tradition. The Halevi Choral Society has commissioned several pieces from him which have been very well received. Here is *Mi Sheasa Nisim*, commissioned by Chaim Najman at Shaarey Zedek. The cantor's part will be sung by Cory Winter...

I'm going to end with some Max Janowski you don't know! I'm also going to mention Joshua Lind - he was extremely prolific. Also Bernard Brindel who passed away this last week, who was the brother of Hazzan Harold Brindell, a marvellous composer who wrote for the synagogue in an expressive and romantic style. We do have others but we hope we've given you a taste of things.

Another bright star of our Chicago heritage is Max Janowski. Everyone knows his *Sim Shalom*, but I'm going to present a little-known piece which was on Moe Silverman's record-

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ing *Songs of My People*, arranged by Janowski for that recording - *Oyfn Veg Shteyt a Boym*. It will be sung by Eileen Berman, the soloist at Temple Beth Israel...

And lastly, our *piece de resistance*, also by Janowski. Cory Winter, who probably is the best exponent of Janowski that we have today, will introduce it. This is something extremely rare - it's going to be an experience!

*Cory:* I wanted to tell you a bit about Max from a personal standpoint. Max would have been the first person to tell you he was a genius, and I'll give you one example of his genius. We had a concert together in Sacramento, California, where the first part of the program was his playing and conducting the Emperor Concerto of Beethoven. It was very hot in Sacramento and the piano was not in an air-conditioned room, and it flattened one half-tone. He instantly transposed the Concerto to E Major so he could play with the orchestra who were in E flat. And in typical fashion, he did it flawlessly, it was something I've never seen before in my life. After he was finished he got up and lectured the audience that no one in the world could do what he just did!

I've brought a tape he made with Bea Horwitz, the daughter of Hazzan Anshel Friedman. The two of them together were kind of my musical parents, I knew them from when I was very small and they made the difference in my life. This tape was made on our local classical music station WFMT in the 50s. I want you to hear the way Max played and Bea sang, because together it was a phenomenon that cannot be replicated anywhere. Singing with Max accompanying, you had to re-orient yourself because it turned out to be a piano solo with a vocal obbligato! But with two people of a like talent as here, the results are really amazing...

(tape of arrangements of Israeli folk songs)

*Ms. Karzen:* You've experienced a little bit of what these people have left to us as a written legacy. But they have left something much more important, and that is who all of us are who came into contact with them. I leave you with one thought: let's keep the color of our tradition alive - let's stop making everything so antiseptic. I'm old enough now to speak my mind: we've cleaned everything up to the point where there ain't nothing left anymore. Let's go back to the original, and let's impart this to our children. And let us share from different parts of the country, because the greatest treasures get locked in somebody's basement. We in Chicago sing a certain repertoire, in New York there's a repertoire- if all of us would share, think what riches we would have.



## Placement Practicum

**Hazzanim Arnold Schultz, Wheeling, IL; Judith Meyersberg, Long Grove, IL;  
Devin Goldenberg, Paradise Valley, AZ  
Chair: Hazzan Morton Shames, Springfield, MA**

*Hazzan Shames:*

The original premise of this session was that a lot of hazzanim talk their way into a position by their voice, and out of a position by their answers to the hiring committee!

Here we have three candidates looking for positions. I'm not sure how the committee's going to play it - it may be for the same congregation, or for three different congregations. There are no rules whether this is your first position or your fifth - just say who you are and feel free to be nervous. I'm looking for intelligent answers to intelligent questions. If they are not intelligent questions - this is an interview, what would you do? Make fun of the question? It depends on your personality - how strong are you? Let's see. Here is the first candidate.

*Committee Member A:* I'm from a synagogue in the north side of Chicago. It's got about 1200 families, affiliated with the Conservative movement. We have a day school, a religious school, a youth group. Hazzan, I know you have a beautiful voice and can do a wonderful job on Saturday morning - but Saturday morning is about five or six hours a week, and we're really interested in how you're going to involve yourself in the congregation, how you're going to invest in it, what kind of contribution you can make to the daily life of the congregation. Apart from your pulpit activities on Saturday morning, what do you look at to make a difference in the life of our congregation?

*Candidate X:* In reality, like any hazzan, I probably spend only twenty per cent of my time davening, and the rest of the time I'm dealing with children, in training or managing the B'nei Mitzvah process, but my difference in the past has been in dealing pastorally. I consider myself a 'pastoral hazzan'. Besides the area of counselling, which I do a lot of, I'm currently involved in adult education, in teaching lay people how to leyn Torah...In other words, my job as I view it, besides standing there as shaliah tsibbur, is to help other Jews improve their Judaism and Judaic skills in any way that I can.

*Committee Member B:* Our Congregation has a morning minyan. Do you plan to attend every morning?

*Cand:* I hope to attend many of them but because of the time constraints that are placed on me - a lot of my time is spent in late evenings - sometimes that becomes a real problem. I certainly would like to make myself available for some of the minyanim, but in general, if I'm seeing children in prime time and adults late at night, that would make my job 20 hours a day. I try to maximize my time with the congregation, so that might make morning minyanim difficult.

*B:* If a congregant came to you after attending morning minyanim for a long time and said: "Hazzan, I'm really not getting anything out of the morning minyan. Could you help me?" How would you approach that?

*X:* I would probably ask that individual what it is they feel they're not getting out of it, and what they want.

*B:* A long time ago I used to attend morning minyans where the hazzan or the person in charge

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went into the Pirkei Avot, just a bit at the end of the minyan. Would you feel that that would be in your purview?

*Cand:* So you're saying making a brief adult education forum out of the minyan?

*B:* Or a dvar Torah that the person going to work could mull over during the day.

*Cand:* It would certainly be something to consider. I would have to see before devoting myself to constant morning minyans whether that is something the congregation would like me to do as far as maximizing my time. If that's a priority rather than doing something in the late evenings then I have to see where the congregation feels my time is to be best utilized.

*Committee Member C:* Cantor, we have a large Hebrew School. Other than Bar/Bat Mitzvah, what is your role in the Hebrew School?

*Cand:* In the past I did teach some Hebrew. That is not in my view a very good return on the congregation's investment for the kind of money they pay a hazzan as opposed to a Hebrew teacher. I do want to have a presence in the Hebrew School. In what way? I would have to find out, depending on what the curriculum is of your school, but basically I would like to have a presence, maybe teaching sections of davening, talking about comparative religions...I would have to talk to the Head of the school to see the best way I could insert myself there.

*B:* Would you integrate Bar/Bat Mitzvah training as part of the Hebrew School curriculum?

*Cand:* I would hope that some of that is already part of the curriculum, insofar as they are coming out learning Hebrew and Prayer Book skills. If it isn't, that is something I would like to discuss with the rabbi and the head of the School. I can't at this point say how your school system works.

*C:* How would you deal with a young person who was studying for his Bar Mitzvah who obviously wasn't committed to that process?

*Cand:* That's probably 80% of the students we get! Obviously, not all the youngsters are there because they nudged their parents to take them to Hebrew School and become Bar/Bat Mitzvah. One way to do it is through interaction between me, the rabbi and the student, to make this process interesting as well as getting them to learn what they have to learn. In my current position I teach a B'nei Mitzvah class where they learn, apart from what they need to do skillwise, what I call - maybe it's a misnomer - 'Judaic Trivia', I'm covering other bases and trying to have fun at the same time. There's no way I can inject a desire into a child if it's not already there. Hopefully that's part of what they're growing up with at home.

*C:* Have you ever had to recommend to a young person that they just not proceed with their Bar/Bat Mitzvah as scheduled?

*Cand:* In 18 years I've done it twice, and it's been with the parent. Those kinds of things are very delicate, and generally there is a special reason why it has to be done. I don't know of many children who should not be able to say they had a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Even children who are developmentally disabled can be brought to Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

*Committee Member A:* Hazzan, our time is running short, we have some other candidates to interview. We're very impressed, but would you just sing a short selection. We'll let you choose - don't let me choose because I'll choose something hard.

*Cand (sings): Me'al pisgat Har Hatsofim...*

*A:* Thank you very much.



*Hazzan Shames:* How do you think the candidate did? He's pretty articulate, huh? Did he get the job?

*Committee:* Yes!

*Shames:* I think that as a candidate you were terrible. You gave them everything they want. There's no way you can back out from all the positions you took. You won't have 30 seconds to to yourself. Next Candidate!

*Candidate Y:* My name is Hazzan Devin Goldenberg. I'm currently in Scottsdale, Arizona at Har Zion.

*Committee Member B:* We were just talking to a gentleman who didn't seem too interested in the job. He told us the minyan wasn't a priority for him, the Hebrew School wasn't a priority - basically the only thing he wanted to do was sit down and talk to folks who were near death. What we need is a cantor who is involved in the living community. How are you going to do that?

*Cand:* Currently I'm the Director of Education as well as hazzan in my congregation. I have an administrative assistant who helps me. I would always want to continue working at all grade levels. I also am very active in adult education, not just in synagogue skills, but in Tanach and Midrash. With regard to the previous candidate, pastoral duties are very important. In my current congregation they only take up about three to four hours a week with bikkur holim, unless there's a loss in the congregation. I try to attend the minyan whenever possible. I participate as baal keriah or baal tefilah when needed. It is not irresponsible not to attend the minyan - I can't be in two places at once. I'm often teaching during the evening minyan - 10, 10:30 at night. This makes the morning minyan difficult sometimes. Currently I'm at the morning minyan three or four days out of six.

*B:* Hazzan, do you get along with the rabbi in your congregation? Have you had any problems with him?

*Cand:* None at all. (Laughter) He's not here to defend himself, he is a mensh's mensh.

*B:* What is your role in regard to the rabbi? How do you see yourself?

*Cand:* The rabbi and I work very co-operatively. We study together...I know it's not always that way, but one should work for that.

*A:* Our congregation is an egalitarian congregation. Do you have any problems with women on the bima, women leyning Torah, women wearing taleisim..?

*Cand:* Not at all.

*A:* Do you have this in your current congregation?

*Cand:* Yes.

*B:* Recently we lost our Torah-reading person, and in a cost-saving promotion we decided not to hire somebody else. Would you be willing to read Torah on a weekly basis?

*Cand:* Every week? No, to be very frank. I have been a hazzan sheni and a baal keriah for a congregation and read the Torah at all times. I currently read the Torah quite often, but not the entire reading on Shabbat, it's a bit much. We do a full hazarat hashats at both shaharit and musaf. Even were it not a strain on me physically, it would be a strain on the ears of the congregation to hear the same voice constantly.

*B:* So how would you address the situation?

*Cand:* I would train people to read. In my current congregation, I've only been there a year, I

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have developed a core of Torah readers, I've added ten. In my previous congregation we had a core of regular leyners, including teenagers, there were about 60 - half of them could work without any supervision.

A: That's pretty good.

B: What's the main reason you want to come to our congregation?

*Cand:* I haven't worked out an answer to that for this mock interview! I'm not looking. But the answer when I looked before was that one is always looking for a shidduch, something that will last a lifetime for a congregation that one will grow with and be part of. If one doesn't have that, I think one should look elsewhere.

*Committee Member C:* Our congregation is only in the position of writing a three-year contract. Are you comfortable with that?

*Cand:* Yes. I wouldn't expect more than that for a first contract, I wouldn't settle for less.

C: What are some of the things you feel you do particularly well?

*Cand:* I'm told my congregations enjoy my davening; I enjoy my pastoral work; I enjoy working with b'nei mitzvah; I enjoy helping people find pleasure in Torah.

A: Our congregation recently added the imahot in the amidah - how does that strike you?

*Cand:* The alternative avot? I've never davened it. I'll figure out a way to make the words scan with the tune! Personally I think it's a bit unnecessary, but I understand the idea of political correctness and being gender inclusive.

A: A couple of times a year we use the organ on Shabbat. How do you react to that?

*Cand:* I've never done it. It sounds fun. Do you have a good organist?

A: We fired him.

C: Do you sing with a choir?

*Cand:* I have trained choirs in all my positions, my references speak of that.

C: Can you lead the choir?

*Cand:* A bima choir around the amud? I've done that.

C: Well, they're up in the choir loft.

*Cand:* Does the hazzan face the congregation?

C: Yes.

*Cand:* Oh. How do they see me?

C: You'll have to work that out.

A: What do you need to know about our congregation?

*Cand:* How many members, how many children in the school, how many b'nei mitzvah per year...

C: Wouldn't you have done that research before this interview?

*Cand:* Well, I did ask but I wasn't given an answer...

B: We don't allow our clergy to accept outside honoraria. How do you feel about that? *Cand:* I wish you hatslachah and I've enjoyed this very much!... Well, I might ask: Is this written policy? Does it apply to the rabbi also? Is it open to discussion?

A: We have a very large Jews By Choice program in our synagogue. They meet on Shabbat afternoon and have havdalah afterwards. What could you bring to this program?

*Cand:* I have participated in conversion programs - are these prospective converts?

A: Yes, most are converting because of an impending marriage.



*Cand* : It sounds like a wonderful program, something I would enjoy participating in.

*B*: Could you sing your favorite piece from the High Holydays?

*Cand*: It's not my favorite piece, but it is the High Holydays. (sings): *Misod* ....

*B*: That's very nice but it's kind of Jewish. We're trying to modernize our services and do things like Yigdal to rock melodies. What would you think of that?

*Cand*: I'd have to hear it.

*C*: Do you do rock?

*Cand*: Yes I do, but not on the bima.

*B*: Our rabbi sometimes speaks a bit longer than usual, and there are life-cycle events that take up a bit of time on the bima, and then we find we don't have time for a full repetition of the amidah. Could you give us your thoughts on that?

*Cand*: Timing is something I'd rather discuss with the rabbi.

*B*: We'd like your opinion.

*Cand*: I think that a hazarat hashats is one of the greatest opportunities for congregational song. To deny them that opportunity, to limit congregational singing to the Torah service and a few piyyutim at the end is to do them a disservice. I would hope that a way could be found to manage the time without denying this and the various simhahs - that is also an opportunity for congregational song.

*A*: We're out of time.

(*Speaker from the floor*): Could our candidate have given a different answer when asked if he would carry out tasks in additional areas? I think he was too confrontational. He could have asked for more financial compensation.

*Committee Member*: That's the answer I was expecting.

*Another speaker from the floor*: I once didn't have a contract for five years because they wouldn't delete the section that said I couldn't accept any honorarium. In the end they gave me a lump sum to allow for this. There are ways of getting around it.

*Another speaker*: There is a reason for this. The synagogue considers it a privilege of every member to have the rabbi and cantor at their every beck and call, it's part of the package of belonging to the synagogue. The solution I found was to create a cantor's discretionary fund and the honoraria go there and can be used for anything, such as something for the cantor's office, or a party for the students...

*Shames*: If you answer that way you will lose a job. No matter what you thought, that's not the right answer. If it's something that eats you alive you wait till after the committee meeting, you go to the friendliest-looking person on the committee and say : "You mean that if I do a concert in another place I can't take the money?" "No we're talking about funerals." "Oh, thank God."

*Next Candidate*: My name is Cantor Judith Meyersberg.

*Committee Member A*: Good afternoon Cantor. Obviously you're a member of the distaff side. There are members of our congregation who have a problem with a female hazzan. How would you deal with them?

*Cand*: Well, I have been approached several times in my career by people who have made different comments, some more challenging than others. The best thing to do is I smile sweetly at them and say I'm sorry they feel that way and I hope I didn't impede their ability to daven

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with me and I hope they can come to find a new understanding eventually.

*Committee Member B:* The biggest problem we have in our shul is with our morning minyan and our Religious School, neither is going very well. How would you involve yourself in these activities? Would they be a priority for you?

*Cand:* Could you give me some more information about the morning minyan?

*B:* We're having trouble making a minyan! We need more support from the clergy. We've already interviewed a couple of candidates who don't seem to find that very important. We think it is. Also teaching our kids how to daven is important. What experience have you had with this?

*Cand:* My experience has been somewhat limited but I have felt that it's very important to empower the congregation to be full participants in the service, for instance we develop a core of minyan-goers. There are times when you are doing not only teaching, evenings and Sundays, but there's also counselling, hospital visits, pastoral things, that would make it rather difficult to be at a minyan every morning.

*B:* How would you involve the congregation?

*Cand:* I haven't figured that out yet. I would love to get together with the committee and work it out.

*A:* Hazzan, are you married?

*Cand:* Unfortunately I'm a widow.

*B:* I'm sorry. Do you find it easy to socialize with the congregation?

*Cand:* In what way? To make conversation, I have no problems. I'm really not clear on what you're asking.

*B:* If a family said, "Come over for dinner"?

*Cand:* Provided I could fit it into my schedule I'd be absolutely delighted to accept every invitation.

*B:* Are you comfortable in doing your pastoral duties at a funeral and so on?

*Cand:* In both the positions I have held I have done precisely that.

*Committee Member C:* Other than your work with the Bar/Bat mitzvah program, how do you see your role with the young people in the congregation?

*Cand:* I have worked with the junior choir in both congregations. They typically sang monthly for family services, Hanukkah, Purim etc., and I kept them very active. I've participated in weekend retreats with different age-groups, I've done some teaching in the High School...

*A:* Could you describe your kashrut and shabbat observance level?

*Cand:* I have not to this point observed kashrut, that is not something that is out of the realm of possibility. It is an issue I have struggled with for many years and I've not finished struggling with it...As regards being shomer shabbat, will my salary be sufficient to afford a house within walking distance of the shul?

*B:* If it were not, would you ride on Shabbat?

*Cand:* I would not have much choice, would I?

*C:* If a family is having a non-kosher wedding and our rabbi has already refused to officiate, would you officiate?

*Cand:* Are both members Jewish?

*C:* They're both members.



*Cand:* I would not have a problem doing that.

*B:* Even if our rabbi has said no.

*Cand:* I guess I would want to make sure that my rabbi would not have a problem with me officiating at it.

*A:* Do I understand that you would perform a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew?

*Cand:* No.

*A:* I don't understand your answer then.

*Cand:* I asked if both parties were Jewish, and I was given that both parties are Jewish.

*Committee Member C:* Hazzan, our Youth Director is taking a leave of absence unexpectedly and we need someone for that, would you be willing and able to do that?

*Cand:* Honestly, I think that's a little beyond the scope of my abilities.

*C:* Why are you leaving your present congregation?

*Cand:* My current congregation has a tradition that goes back to its founding that is very heavily into folk music. When I applied there I explained to them that I was operatically trained and I have an operatic voice. I was willing to do many kinds of music, and they said they were willing to try, but as time went on they realized that they missed their folk tradition and they weren't comfortable exploring as many different styles as I wanted, and since I am not a folk singer we felt it best to part amicably.

*C:* Could you give us a little tune..?

*Cand (sings):* *Hevenu shalom aleikhem...*

*B:* Thank you. In your repertoire, do you stay just with traditional Jewish melodies or do you expand that into more modern Western forms?

*Cand:* The best way to describe my style is very eclectic. I have been Western-trained but I also have a strong liturgical background, having studied the tradition very seriously for four years. I have done everything from Sulzer and Lewandowski to Meir Finkelstein...

*C:* I guarantee you will never run into one cantorial search committee in the world who knows who any of those people are!

*Cand:* The Misinai composers...

*B:* You'll be lucky if the committee have been to services three times in the last year!

*C:* What kinds of adult education would you participate in?

*Cand:* One of my dreams is an adult education trop class, so we could develop a baal koreh program, and a class for Megilat Ester, so we could have eventually a full reading of Megilat Ester with the accompanying hilarity. Let's explore the congregational melodies.

*B:* What participation do you see in terms of the minyan?

*Cand:* Provided that I could work my schedule out I would love to participate three or four times a week, but that would be a pretty full schedule when you add on education and Board meetings and Ritual meetings and hospitals and shivas...

*A:* Could we count on you to read Torah once a week?

*Cand:* Absolutely.

*C:* Because we have financial restraints due to a large building project going on, we can only offer you say \$50,000 a year including, say housing. How do you feel about that?

*Cand:* I don't think you are being realistic, I'm sorry.

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C: I don't think so either!

*Shames:* Are you finished with the Candidate?

*Cand:* Yes, I think I'm toast. Thank you.

*Shames:* How many questions about liturgy did you hear? Does that tell you anything? I know that part of my job is to make liturgy and davening very important to these people. The committee were asked to be very business-like. You're not going to be asked for the Kaddish for Tal, but you'd sure as hell better know it, and all the nusah.

*Committee Member:* There's also an opportunity for the Candidate to take control of the interview by talking about things you want to talk about, and there are questions that you need to ask, so they can hear things you want them to hear about you.

*Speaker from the Floor:* The most successful interview is not when the candidate is being shot questions, but is given the opportunity to express interest in the position. There was an opportunity when one gentleman asked "Why do you want to come to our congregation?" This is the opportunity to say "How wonderful this congregation is, it has a great tradition, I want to be part of that.." Turn the interview around. We are hearing a lot about the minyan issue. There are a number of ways of getting the congregation involved, the cantor could take the bar mitzvah child on a Thursday morning and bring the entire family into the minyan experience - that's what they want to hear, and they would be very happy if the cantor came one day a week to the minyan just to bring a bar mitzvah boy. Try and find out from them what's really critical, and whatever they want you to do, if you really want the job, you do it. You can turn it around later on in your career by educating them as to how you want to shape your cantorial career.

*Committee Member:* That's exactly right, I tried to get at that by bringing up two themes, the Religious School and the minyan, because those are the two best ways that a member of the clergy can become involved in the community. You can run classes, breakfasts - our candidate from Scottsdale gave a beautiful exposition about how he trains readers for Saturday morning. What a congregational search committee is looking for more than anything else is a hazzan who is going to invest in the community, be part of it, offering spiritual leadership, especially to our young people. Not one of our candidates talked about how they would teach our young people to daven shaharit for example.

*Committee Member:* You can use open-ended questions to talk about not only what you've done in the past but what you would like to do in the future. That shows you've thought creatively and have got some fresh new ideas and energy.

*Floor:* When you asked them to sing something, I was a little surprised that two out of the three candidates sang something separate from liturgy. I would never sing just a melody.

*Committee Member:* I think you're wildly over-estimating the intelligence of the ordinary search committee to know the difference! You're dealing with a level of ignorance that is appalling.

*Floor:* But you have a cantor who can educate you, that's why he should do that. Another thing I was surprised about is that one day of the week is sacred, I cannot function without a day off - this is part of the Torah, we have to have a day off. I would be very clear to a committee, would you let me have a day off?



*Committee Member:* In any search committee there are deal-breakers, non-negotiable demands, and there are deal-breakers for you, things that are important to you.

*Floor:* One thing missing from this exercise was any real-life information about the congregation. In a real-life interview I've done research and I've been prepared. In real-life I've had the chance to be with you for a Shabbat, so I've gleaned a lot of information about who you are and what you want.

*Committee Member:* If you haven't met the members before, you have every right to say, "Can we take a few minutes to tell me about yourselves?"

*Shames:* There are some committees who just don't have the time. They say, "We're going to have three evenings of interviews". You go there when it's dark at night, you can't even see the synagogue, you walk into a room of strangers and they say, "Please sing Hineni...thank you." It's pretty rough.

*Floor:* I remember one time when I went to a congregation, before where I am currently, and I remember the pride of the committee when they said, "Our rabbi hasn't taken a day off in five years!" Or they might say, "Will you read Torah?" Well, does the rabbi read Torah? How do you compare the rabbi and cantor? Are they equals?

*Committee Member:* That's an inappropriate question, we're not interviewing a rabbi.

*Floor:* The rabbi's the captain and you're the lieutenant.

*Floor:* We're looking to be equals but in the eyes of the congregation we're not.

*Committee Member:* We're not interviewing the rabbi.

*Floor:* They have to understand our point of view.

*Committee Member:* That's an unfortunate way of looking at it. In the abstract there's a difference in status between the rabbi and cantor, it's not just that they're unequal, they perform very different functions. When we asked about adult education we got 'trop classes' and 'davening classes', nobody ever talked about running a class in Mishnah or Midrash. We'd love to have a hazzan teach that. When you get into the community - what are you going to do? Whatever your status is at the time of the interview you generate your own based on your own effort. My own congregation is famous for the role that its hazzanim have had over the last century - people who built up status based on their own accomplishments. That's what the congregation is looking for.

*Floor:* The committee should have tried to find out more about the human being you were interviewing rather than "What classes will you teach, when will you attend?" Rather: "Who are you, why did you become a hazzan? What's your family like?" Those questions are just as important as "What kind of services will you give?"

*Committee Member:* Those are questions we absolutely should have asked.

*Committee Member:* I think eventually those questions would have come up.

*Floor:* The first thing for a committee is to say "We value you," otherwise you'll never get a good answer out of anyone.

*Meyersdorf:* Last year in my audition somebody asked me to sing an Israeli song, and I thought "What a jerk," but I sang one verse of *Yerushalayim shel Zahav*. The congregation didn't call me back to do a Shabbat till two and a half months later, and then the same jerk said the reason they didn't call me back sooner was because my voice was too big and they didn't think I was outgoing enough. It was because my voice was too operatic that they wanted me to do an

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Israeli song. And this jerk happens to be the Vice-President in charge of ritual. It turned out that he's really not a jerk but just tone-deaf.

*Committee Member:* You can respond to the question by saying "I'd also like to sing this..."

*Floor:* The hazzan should meet with the rabbi to see how they can work together. If they can't work together there is no use to interview that hazzan, that relationship will never work.

*Shames:* It's not your choice, the rabbi may not be in town, or he may say "I want it to be a committee decision."

*Floor:* We need to have a dual clergy. I know cantors who know more about Mishnah Brurah than some rabbis, and there are rabbis who have educated cantors in nusah. Don't be so quick to say the rabbi is the CEO. For a hazzan to be told by a rabbi "You're not going to sing this correct melody on Shabbat, sing the Friday Night melody they know" - that demeans the hazzan.

*Committee Member:* Your comment goes to the governance of a synagogue, when in the modern age running a synagogue is running a healthy-sized business. You've got all kinds of professionals - the Head of the Day School, the Head of the Religious School, the Executive Director...How you govern a synagogue today is a very difficult question. It goes far beyond the cantor and the rabbi's role.

*Floor:* How would the committee feel if the cantor approached the rabbi before he approached the committee?

*Committee Member:* In our synagogue we would assume that would happen. It would give you a source of information. There is no feeling of going behind anyone's back.



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## Current Images of Jews in the Movies: Not A Pretty Picture

Gene Siskel

Chair: Hazzan Henry Rosenblum, Highland Park, IL

*Hazzan Henry Rosenblum:*

Gene and Marlene Siskel celebrated the bat mitzvah of their daughter this past year. They're congregants of mine, they live here in the city and come up to Highland Park. Gene grew up in our congregation and knew this was the place he wanted his daughter to become bat mitzvah. They committed themselves to coming every Sunday morning to a special program that we have for the bar/bat mitzvah children and parents together, where they come to minyan together and then study together. I said to Gene one day, "We have a convention that's going to be taking place, I would love it if you would be willing to share your expertise with us," and he said, "You're not asking me to do an easy thing, to talk about Jews in cinema, but because you asked me, I'll do it."

*Gene Siskel:*

Frequently I will turn in the middle of this speech and wait for someone to respond, but there won't be anybody there!

The hazzan said to me, "Condolences for what happened this afternoon" - referring to a certain basketball team. I didn't say it at the time, but my favorite Yiddish expression is "Nisht geferlekh". Unfortunately, what I'm going to talk to you about is geferlekh, very important and sad.

The headline, the only idea I want to present, and I'm going to present it repeatedly in multi facets, is that the image of the Jews in the movies is terrible, shameful, painful, hurtful, ignorant and disrespectful, almost without exception. Lest you think I'm exaggerating for any effect, I'm a reporter, I see all these movies, I'm trained to describe things just as I see them. I have not exaggerated.

I can get your attention with the first clip, because when I saw this three years ago that's when I decided that if ever I were asked to talk about the images of Jews I would say, "It's not going to be any fun but I'll do it". I'm going to write about it and this discussion is sort of a warm-up for that.

The movie is called *North*. It was pretty much a failure by Rob Reiner, one of the most successful film makers in the world today in terms of getting audience responses to his material. I was thrilled that the film didn't get much of a response, but these movies live on in video and broadcasts so that tens of millions of people will often see a film that's a complete failure. This is a comedy about a boy who wants to get a new set of parents, basically. That theme has been done before in *Irreconcilable Differences* which was a pretty good picture, an entertaining and thoughtful comedy. Here we meet the boy called North - Elijah Wood, a good actor. He's going to call his father whom he wants to get away from. His father is a pants tester in a factory. Here we're going to see his father, he's tester #6. You're going to see in a tracking shot the other pants pressers before you see the father, played by Jason Alexander. The movie is written by Andrew Shineman and Alan Zwybel. Let's take a look at the visual punchline of this scene. Do

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you see who is #7? We're going to think about what the joke is, what the intention is, what the effect on an audience is...

How do you like seeing the Torah as wallpaper? That was background. You saw the human being in the foreground...I was just going to show you this one clip and call it a day.

There's 9 candles so it's a hannukiah. Did you notice the Rebbe -we'll say that's who it is, I don't know what they were thinking when they planned the scene. He was saying Al Chet, and we know when that's said. There may be a debate whether he was saying something else, but my case will not fall on what he was saying. This is a comedy, the end of a scene, so this is the punchline, not that Jason Alexander is doing a dip in a powder blue suit - the powder blue is for comic effect because that's declassé- those sophisticates in Hollywood know that that's declassé.

I was floored when I saw that scene. That's funny, supposedly. So - what's funny? is the obvious question. I don't mean any disrespect in the phraeseology I'm using, I'm trying to understand what could potentially be funny about that, and what someone who wrote it, photographed it, played it, stood on the set and nattered along and laughed along- what they could have thought was funny? Well, the man looks funny, his body movements are funny, he's dressed funny- we're supposed to laugh at every one of those images - like the other characters, the lederhosen, the lumberjack, the golfer. Then there's the background: if you watch things closely, which I'm paid to do, there's a painted backdrop behind Jason Alexander of people at a formal party. An order went out to paint a backdrop behind the praying man. So - balloons... Torah ...?? Rob Reiner, Andrew Shineman, Alan Zwybel, Jason Alexander ...what were they thinking?? I showed this scene at an ADL function in Los Angeles a couple of years ago, and I was very critical of the motion picture industry in front of many people from Hollywood. I was the keynote speaker and I hadn't received the program till I got there. Much to my shock, the Master of Ceremonies was - Jason Alexander! I called the writer, Alan Zwybel- he currently has a play in New York, *Bunny Bunny*. A dear friend of the late Gilda Radner, he is a wonderful comedy writer for *Saturday Night Live* and many other things. We ended up having a two-hour conversation in which he ultimately apologized to me. We had to cut the conversation off because he was busy preparing his son's bar mitzvah.

About a month after I saw that scene I mentioned it to Warren Beatty, one of the smartest people I've ever met, and right there at the top of the profession. He is not Jewish. I asked him: Why does this happen? Can you think of positive images? And Mr Beatty said: "Jewish people are very smart. I think they think other people get the joke. But other people don't always get the joke." Now - think about that. He wasn't saying this was a legitimate joke, and I'm not saying it was a legitimate joke, but even if it were - who might get it and who might not? You know the old line - "Well it's OK if we joke about it" ...But maybe, and I'm quoting Mr Beatty, we're not so smart to joke about it. I would offer a challenge to the old line "The strength of the Jewish people is their sense of humor- their ability to laugh at themselves through adversity" and all that, to make fun of themselves. In the moment of adversity, maybe so - maybe that is one way of coping. But this is not a case of adversity. This is prosperity. I would make the argument that it is the very figure being laughed at here that is the strength of the Jewish people. The strength of your voices is the strength of the Jewish people, not somebody laughing at somebody praying, at the very least most personally and very clearly ques-



tioning obedience to the Law. I haven't seen this for a while - but I heard your "Oooh's," and that's my reaction.

I asked Alan Zwybel, knowing a bit about how movies are made, that somebody had to tell the praying figure to beat his breast - it wasn't in the script. In the entertainment world, that's called "comic business". My guess is that Rob Reiner probably is about as observant as, or no more than, I am, and I think he was probably thinking of Al Chet, even people in this room who are more observant than Rob or me thought it was Al Chet. I bet that's what he was thinking of - the holiest day of the year. A direct shot. Sad.

Think about what mindset would do that. Here's a funny character - weird, strange, funny. Jason Alexander, TV star of *Seinfeld*, is telling him, "Knock it off". Who tells people in prayer to "knock it off"? When was that heard? Is this character worthy of ridicule? Where does that come from? Probably embarrassment: "Those people who do that - they embarrass me, so I can get a laugh, I can score off them by saying I get the joke." Following Mr Beatty's insight, that's not the strength of the Jewish people at all, to score off the Jewish people. "Knock it off" ..??

What does it do to children who would see this picture? *North* is a children's film, actually, it was not R-rated, and it has a child at the center. My kids didn't see *North*, thankfully. That seems a quick hit, that's a subliminal scene, that's not a centerpiece of the movie, but it's there, Bang! "Knock it off" is said by a star to a nobody - I didn't look at the credits, but when I write about it I will get hold of that extra and ask him what it was like to play, was that his own beard... We'll get into it, the very specific decisions. I'm stunned.

*Question from the floor:* While it's true that this is negative Jewish, maybe it's possible that the Jewish writers felt that they had to knock a Jew to compensate for knocking somebody else. Is that possible?

*Siskel:* No! How is the guy in the lederhosen being knocked? An even more pointed question - what is being knocked in the scene with the guy in the lederhosen? Let me state the answer. It's my opinion, but what's being knocked in the scene with the guy with the lederhosen is the lederhosen, not the guy.

*Question:* Not the Swiss people?

*Siskel:* Not the Swiss people at all. In fact, if you would ask people like me, "Who wears lederhosen?" the name "Swiss" wouldn't come up, first or second. "German" then "Austrian". We can't even decide who the guy is! But we all know what the guy who's number 7 is - and pardon me for using the word "guy". He's Jewish. I repeat to you, not only do we in this room apparently not know who the guy in the lederhosen is, it's the lederhosen being knocked. Just like it's the blue tuxedo being knocked, not the guy in it. Clothing is being knocked, but not here. If you think that Rob Reiner thinks that a tallis per se is funny, I don't think he thinks it is. If you asked him if lederhosen is funny, I think he'd say, Yes it is. So it's the additive quality of an intensely praying, Jewish man that's funny.

*Question:* If someone like Mel Brooks makes scenes about Jews with titles like *Jews in Space* - does that make you nervous?

*Siskel:* I like to talk about movies I've seen recently. I'm very wary of making generalized remarks because they tend to get generalized responses and nobody really engages. I want to get really specific, so I'm a bit reluctant to get into this.

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Let me take you through scenes that we've all seen.

I may not offer you anything worse than what you just saw. When I said "multi-faceted", now you're going to see some of the other facets. I have four other scenes to show you from three other movies, all recent, all made since that one.

Here's the Jewish Nerd. This is the sequel to one of the most successful films of recent years, *City Slickers*, with Billy Crystal, written by Lowell Gans and Bobby Lou Mandel, and co-written by Billy Crystal. Here's a scene from *City Slickers* 2. At the end, a couple of characters are brought back who were objects of laughter in the first film, the Shalowitz brothers. Here is the extent of the appearance of the Shalowitz brothers where they meet Jack Palance... (*Scene in which the brothers introduce themselves by saying :"We helped bury your brother".*)

No big deal? OK. Think of what Warren Beatty said: Maybe not everybody gets the joke. Are there human beings like the Shalowitz brothers in the world? Yes. Do supporting characters in movies tend to be represented in broad brushstrokes through limited amount of screen time? Yes. Those are all the qualifiers. I'm just telling you that this is what was presented at that time in a very popular movie. My heart sank because of what wasn't there and what could have been done in the dialogue as they walked away. I'm not asking for one more minute or second, but for something smart and positive and still funny - funnier maybe. My point is: was there any chance of that happening? No way! You won't see that. Let me tell you about a conversation I had at the Oscars two years ago with Winona Ryder, who is Jewish, arguably the finest young actress of her generation - you won't get much of an argument on that. Her grandmother is a Holocaust survivor, I believe in her 90's. (Maybe it's her great-grandmother, but she's told me this story twice and said 'grandmother' each time.) I said to her, "You know what I'm waiting for in a movie with you? People love you, and frequently the men in your movies want you. I'm waiting for you to turn to them one time and say, 'Oh I know why you like me, I'm Jewish.' " She knew the chances of that being said were nil, unless - what? If it were said as a ..? (laughter).. joke! Jew: joke. You just made an equation there. She said she had a project coming up, a survivor story that she would be involved in. I said: "That's all well and good for positive images. I'd like to see a contemporary story- a woman today loved because she's Jewish, proud of being Jewish, and attributing positive values to being Jewish." I'm still waiting.

Now we're going to get to a really big hit movie, that will be seen by tens and tens of millions of people for years to come. *The Birdcage*, the re-make of *La Cage aux Folles*. Written by Elaine May, directed by Mike Nicholls- he was born with another name, and I believe many members of his family perished in the Shoah. In the movie a senator and his wife, Gene Hackman and Diane West, and their daughter come to a big dinner at a house in South Beach, Florida. The gay butler answers the door and introduces himself as the Goldman's butler. If I were to ask people, What's being hidden about the couple in the house, 100% would say that they were gay, or they might say that they ran a transvestite night club, something like that. Very few people would even remember that Jewishness was also being hidden in this movie, and I'm going to show you why. Who else didn't want to remember? ...

(*Scene where Goldman introduces himself as "Colman".*)

How many of you saw this movie and forgot this scene? That's at least half, and you'd be more sensitive than others, so maybe 70% of the total audience didn't remember it.



Now let's jump ahead to later on in the movie, the pay-off scene, the scene of gay pride. If you would ask most people what happens in the movie, it's that people with a gay orientation stand up and proudly declare their sexuality in the face of the right-wing political power, represented by Gene Hackman. Let's take a look at how all the secrets are paid off...

(*scene where Gene Hackman cannot accept that the gay character is Jewish*)

Now you can say I'm really being picky, but the Jewishness is played off as a joke, in other words the surprise is, again, the Jewishness. Would it have been as funny flipped around for the mainstream audience? No. It wouldn't have been flipped around. It wouldn't have been that he understood secondarily the Jewishness - the Jewishness is subordinated to the gay issue, and tossed off as a joke.

*Question:* Is this scene satirizing Jewishness or anti-Semitism?

*Siskel:* My call is this: not much attention is paid to this scene, it's a throwaway. There are many lines and gestures of pride with the gay characters. There is no concomitant Jewish pride expressed or behavior shown: here is our hanukkah (in the other movie), we were all bar mitzvah, we keep kosher and we love nothing. The word "Jewish" is played as the joke.

*Speaker from the floor:* I think there's another part to this also, maybe it's the only way they can do it without making it too serious, and that is they were also making some kind of allusion to, if you'll excuse the expression, dumb goyim, they just don't get the message about what the possibilities are...

*Siskel:* I don't believe it was the ignorance of the Gene Hackman character, I think it was that that flag went up first for him. That one he knew about, that one he didn't like, and - bang! That's the throwaway joke. Then we get back to the serious theme, what the movie's really about. If you really wanted to ridicule someone for their anti-Semitism, wouldn't you have to show a little more pride? And then I ask you, could they have shown any less than they showed here? No, they didn't show any.

Now let's go to this past year: *The Mirror Has Two Faces*. You will now meet an Academy Award-nominated actress. I campaigned pretty hard against her for this award and I hope I was in part responsible for Lauren Bacall not winning, because it was a nothing role, the kind of role that Anne Bancroft has played for years. No attention is drawn to it, and because Bacall hadn't won she got some attention...

(*scene as Jewish mother takes her daughter to be married in church on a Saturday*)

That was written by Richard Legravenise. There's the break. You know who the director was, who approved the script: Barbra Streisand.

Think about the things that are being said in there: it's pretty awful in lots of different ways. There's some Yiddish put in, and muffled; most people wouldn't hear it. Again, the serious question about marrying out isn't dealt with but the sabbath is, as a joke. As with the Al Chet - the attacks are very pointed and directed to the most important Jewish occasions and the most observant Jewish people. It could be argued that if this woman knew the phrase *gantseh megilleh* how unobservant and how unfamiliar and how unteaching would she really have been? Again, if the logic doesn't stand up, that's because logic isn't being applied here. That's because Jews, Judaism and Jewish observance in the movies are portrayed by Jewish people as jokes. Objects of ridicule, derision and embarrassment.

I could have had a lot more scenes - these were off the top of my head last week.

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*Question from the floor:* It seems as though the dialog in these films is not thoroughly thought out?

*Siskel:* They don't hold up to my analysis because they're not thinking the way I'm thinking. Of course. By the way, that is not a particularly Jewish issue. That sadly is a non-sectarian problem that I deal with every single week! It's thoughtlessness in writing - the writing is worse than ever...

And now that I've sensitized you to it, let's march into the future. I'll know you're out there, you watch the movies, and you watch them now with my eyes, and you'll see, shot after shot...

(*Question about Siskel's speech to the ADL*)

*Siskel:* I certainly got their attention with that speech. With those kinds of speeches, most people expect happy thoughts, charming stories- for all I know you were expecting that here. On an airplane where *City Slickers 2* was playing recently, I spoke to a Jewish writer/director/actor, Harold Raimus, who happens to live in this area - he was in *Ghostbusters*, *Second City* - a big talent. He said, "I don't do that stuff. Lowell Gans and Bobbie Lou Mandel (two of the most successful and highest-paid screenwriters in Hollywood, they did *Father's Day* recently and *Parenthood*) their humor is all that Borscht Belt comedy stuff." I'm not old enough to have been to the Catskills and seen all that, but maybe it's time for Warren Beatty to step up here and make his remark about Borscht Belt comedy, if that in fact is what it is - I don't even know if a Borscht Belt comedian would say the line "Maybe your birth certificate will be blown up as a Christmas card" or the line about "The only thing you taught me about the sabbath was that Bergdorf's was less crowded"...well, maybe that second one, I don't think the first one. And I don't know about a Borscht Belt comedian doing the Al Chet...

(*Reply to another question*) I agree about people being in fashion and oppressed minorities taking shots and I also tried to hint in movie terms that supporting characters will be painted in broad strokes. But when you tell me that you're going to get as many Moslem jokes, I'll tell you no, not right now in a politically correct climate. This has been going on for a long time. I have seen very few examples if any, in mainstream big pictures, of Jewish pride, and I see these examples constantly.

I am not advocating the elimination of Jews as targets of humor. Directors have a right to put anybody as an object of ridicule or hate. I'm just telling you that this is all that I see...

With regard to *Independence Day*, did anyone see a positive value to Jeff Goldblum's father? Not me. I have a column in *TV Guide*, and I described the father as a kvetching Jewish joke.... What I want to do is eradicate all doubt in your mind, eliminate hope!

Let me tell you the speech that I give when I run into people in the industry, very successful people. Maybe this is a good way to conclude. Maybe you also can say this to people, forget the cinema for a second, when you see for a moment people expressing derision in being Jewish. I say, "Is there any doubt in your mind that you are where you are in this world - in intelligence, your interest in learning and in the arts, in your success - that that isn't due in some significant degree to the fact that you happen to be Jewish? And that somewhere along the line, either in your generation, or one or two or three back, that your ancestors were observant Jews? Observant not only in ritual, but in the spirit of the Law, and the values contained therein?" That usually gets their attention, because no one has ever said "No" to me. And, depending on how comfortable I feel, I say back to them, "Then how dare you? Why would



you trash your birthright?"

*(We regret to note that Gene Siskel passed away shortly before the publication of these Proceedings. - Editor)*

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## **50th Annual Meeting Regional Reports**

### **REPORT OF THE NEW ENGLAND REGION**

This last November, our region held a concert honoring Aryeh Finklestein on his 10th anniversary as hazzan of Congregation Mishkan Tefila of Chestnut Hill. Featuring Aryeh's brother Hazzan Meir Finkelstein as special guest artist, the concert raised \$7,000 for the Cantors Assembly.

For years, the New England Region has successfully run the Baal Tefila Institute for its lay people. Instructor Bob Scherr has announced that the Institute will resume this fall with the study of the Shabbat nusach. This coincides with Bob returning from sabbatical, having studied at the Harvard Divinity School.

Temple Israel of Nantasket, a summer-season congregation, has again approached the C.A. for help in securing service leaders and Torah readers for its summer Shabbat services. Our region has provided such help in the past as part of the Assembly's Ambassador Program.

In addition to his duties at Kehillath Israel in Brookline, Scott Sokol this year took on the directorship of the Jewish Music Institute of Hebrew College. Of interest is his creation of NE'IMA, a national network of Jewish collegiate choral groups.

On May 6th, we will host President Abraham Lubin in a regional meeting, discussing all of the many issues that have emerged for the Assembly recently.

We were saddened this spring by the loss of our longtime member, Charles Lew, of Temple Shalom, Medford, who passed away on Shushan Purim. Steve Dress delivered a moving eulogy at the funeral, as he shared his personal thoughts about his teacher and mentor.

Our region is pleased to congratulate Bob Scherr on his nomination as a Vice-President of the Assembly, and to welcome Ruth Ross as a member of the Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charles D. Osborne, Chairperson



## REPORT OF THE PHILADELPHIA REGION

The Philadelphia Region of the Cantors Assembly (sometimes referred to as the Delaware Valley Region) has continued its long standing schedule of bi-weekly meetings dedicated to the social and professional needs of our members. Active participants number roughly ten men and (remarkably) the first woman member of the Assembly to serve an area congregation—Hazzan Judith Naimark, who is completing her first year at Congregation Beth Shalom of Wilmington, Delaware.

In the course of the year we sang, schmoozed and studied with our colleagues Hazzanim David Katchen, Sheldon Levin, Neil Schwartz, and David Tilman presenting sessions on a diverse array of topics including: INSIGHTS INTO THE MASSORETIC NOTES, WHAT'S NEW AND "HOT" IN JEWISH POPULAR MUSIC, THE HAZZAN AS HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN, and USING THE COMPUTER FOR AUTO-ACCOMPANYING AND SEQUENCING. Additionally, Barry Serota, a longtime friend to many in our region, delighted us with a morning of rare video footage and sound recordings of Hazzanut.

A very valuable meeting took place with local colleagues of the ACC organized by the outreach department of The Woodlynde School, a private school dedicated to the student with learning differences. Through discussion and exchange with their presenters we identified a number of areas of concern and techniques for dealing with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with special needs and/or alternate learning styles.

Our impact on the community level has been felt through members' planning and participation in regional conferences with other professionals and lay-leaders in the field of Jewish education. Conferences have dealt with team-building within synagogues to effect improved educational response. We are currently involved with Camp Ramah in the Poconos in a joint project to develop better Torah readers through cooperation of the home congregations. We are again co-sponsoring a highly successful Zimriyah for adult synagogue choirs of the region.

Plans are currently underway for a major concert in the fall to celebrate the Assembly's fiftieth anniversary.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eliot I. Vogel, Chairperson

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**REPORT OF THE WESTCHESTER/ROCKLAND REGION**

The Westchester/Rockland Region of the Cantors Assembly had a very active year. We combined forces with the Connecticut Region for our meetings. We began the year with an intense and interesting day of study. Hazzan Charles Osborne of Newton Center, MA was our scholar-in-residence. He spoke about and gave hands-on instruction in arranging music. Everyone left the seminar with new ideas. Other meetings during the year included sessions on becoming computerized in our work and how to use the computer to our advantage as well as a sharing session on the music of the Holocaust and programming ideas for Yom HaShoah. It was a year of growth and learning by our members as well as collegiality.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeffrey Shiovitz, Chairperson

**REPORT OF THE NEW JERSEY REGION**

I am pleased to report that the New Jersey Region of the Cantors Assembly has had a successful and productive year. We have given four major concerts and two smaller scale performances, including a performance at the State Theatre in New Brunswick, New Jersey. We are preparing for our upcoming Scholar in Residence program with Dr. Joshua Jacobson which is scheduled for this coming May and we have programmed a “new music rehearsal” in order to begin preparations for next year’s repertoire.

We have also put a considerable amount of time and thought into restructuring and reorganizing our region in an effort to maximize our productivity and efficiency. Our region has approximately thirty active members who meet twice a month for rehearsal and study. All aspects of our activities, from conducting to accounting are performed by our members. Maintaining such a group is “no small job,” and we are finding that our efforts towards organization are paying off.

As our concert fees are dedicated toward raising funds for the Cantors Assembly, we are looking forward to making a significant donation during the convention.

On behalf of our region, I wish to express our sadness on the passing of Hazzan Samuel Rosenbaum. Hazzan Rosenbaum’s influence on the members of the New Jersey Region was far reaching; indeed, on a personal note, his stay at my synagogue as Artist in Residence in 1995 had a profound effect on both the members of the shul and on me.

Finally, I am indebted to the members of the board, Hazzanim Mark Biddelman, Arthur Katlin and Ilan Mamber, for their hard work and their continual support.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet Roth Krupnick, Chairperson



## REPORT OF THE TRI-STATE REGION

On November 18 - 20, 1996 a great concert was planned and carried out very successfully for our members of the Tri-State Region.

Hazzanim from the Executive Council were cordially invited to attend and many of them were present to enhance a three-day conference which included a masters class in Hazzanut, music and the correct way of presenting oneself at a concert.

We had many Hazzanim from out of state singing in our group to a huge success.

Money was raised and turned in to our New York Office.

The sad passing of our dear colleague Hazzan Samuel Rosenbaum this year was a very great shock to all of us, especially to those that knew him.

I had the privilege, many times, of meeting with him, speaking with him and sharing thoughts about forthcoming national conventions including this one in Chicago.

Our Tri-State Region is always very well represented at our conventions.

We are planning more of this type of three-day mini-conventions since many of us live rather a great distance from New York.

May we go from strength to strength.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bruce Wetzler, Chairperson

## REPORT OF THE WEST COAST REGION

The West Coast region has been moving ahead with a few different projects. We are sponsoring an Outreach Concert in a small community in San Luis Obispo, CA, which has no clergy. This program was developed in conjunction with the United Synagogue to reach small communities that need exposure to Hazzanut and Jewish music. In the past, we have sent some of our colleagues to spend Shabbat to keep the community in touch with mainstream Judaism. Our hope is that they will take the proceeds of a concert and perhaps, find a way to have a paid High Holyday Cantor, or pay one to come several times during the year.

At our last meeting, we had the pleasure of having Cantor William Sharlin who was most generous in sharing his newly published music. After this exciting workshop, we had a business meeting. Our agenda included concerns about the Conservative Movement Council, which is a committee comprised of all the different branches of the movement -i.e. Rabbinical Assembly, Cantors Assembly, Women's League, Men's Club, Camp Ramah, U.S.Y. and United Synagogue.

This body, chaired by Elliott Dorff of the University of Judaism, is trying to recreate the principles and direction of what the Conservative Movement should be. In trying to do this, there is a feeling that there is some underlying agenda to break away from the East because of the new Rabbinical School.

We are also getting the feeling that there are other factions with an underlying agenda to

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change the face of the Cantorate. On March 30th, the different branches came together with the lay leadership in a workshop and discussed the “Wertheimer Study on Conservative Synagogues and Their Members.”

The purpose of the workshop was to choose from this study what everyone felt was the most important goal and to work on it as a movement.

There were three of us in attendance — a “whole lot didn’t happen”! But the feeling that some of us got was that this portion of the movement was not concerned about the rest of the movement — but more about themselves and their own ideology.

Hazzanim Joe Cole and Nathan Lam are going to be meeting with Elliott Dorff this week in a pro-active way; there will be more details to follow.

We have also been discussing the possibilities of doing a joint program with Camp Ramah of California and L.A. Hebrew High, with the hope of implementing “Nusah” into the Ramah and Hebrew High experience. We are working to make a proposal for our members to take turns in spending time at Ramah during the summer and possibly try to introduce a class into Hebrew High during the year. And, of course, we would like to use the “Spiro Text”.

We are also discussing the possibility of having our meetings take place, once again, at the University of Judaism, as we feel it’s imperative that a cantorial presence be felt.

And last but not least, for ourselves, we have planned a High Holiday workshop to be held in June.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurie Rimland-Bonn, Chairperson

**REPORT OF THE MIDWEST REGION**

We are a region that has brought together Hazzanim from all Conservative and Reform Congregations. We recognize that ‘Tefilah’ concerns all Jews. We share more in common than that which has historically divided colleagues in the two movements. This forum offered cantors experiences in which we learned from each other by sharing our talents and expertise. The Chicago Association of Cantors was founded in 1988 by Hazzan Shlomo Shuster. We meet each month, discussing our business at separate meetings of the C.A.-A.C.C. We then combine our groups for study and discussion.

Much of the C.A. meetings centered around plans for the Chicago convention. We have also addressed the ongoing concern for better cooperation with our rabbinical colleagues. We hope to present positive progress in the near future that will serve as a model for other regions.

The combined group has shared ideas for musical programs in our respective congregations. All of the Holy Days were studied and new and old music reviewed.

Two highlights this year were cantorial concerts. One in January at Congregation Beth Shalom (Hazzan Steven Stoehr) which included the Chicago Association of Cantors and included Hazzanim Shelly Kaszynski and Steven Stoehr. Chicago Community Chorus members included Hazzanim Judith Meyersberg and Eric Wasser. The proceeds, \$2,100.00, were



donated to MAZON, A Jewish Response to World Hunger. Another, in April, entitled "An Afternoon with the Cantors" at Congregation Beth Judea (Hazzan Roger Weisberg) featured Hazzanim Henry Rosenblum and Shlomo Shuster, and also included Hazzanim Joel Gordon, Arnold Schultz and Roger Weisberg. Proceeds from this concert, \$5,000.00, were contributed to the Cantors Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shlomo Shuster, Chairperson

#### **REPORT OF THE SOUTHEAST REGION**

Our Southeast Region Cantors Assembly held an installation of officers here at Temple Emanu-El on January 21, 1997 — Hazzanim David Feuer, Chairperson; Mitchell Martin, Secretary; Mark Kula, Treasurer and Elaine Shapiro, Past Chairperson. The installation was conducted by Hazzan Elaine Shapiro, Rabbi Leonid Feldman and special participation of Hazzan Isaac Goodfriend and Sol Zim together with approximately thirty-five colleagues.

We are planning to continue revitalizing the region with activities that will include: Concerts; Study Groups; Local Conventions; Other Cantorial Groups, Rabbis, Organizations; Fundraising for Scholarships; Programs to Educate our Congregations in the Understanding and Interpretation of our Prayers and Torah through Music

We have already had three regional conventions where we experienced exciting seminars. As a result of the enthusiasm derived from these seminars we encourage the National Assembly to consider having the November 1997 Executive meeting in Florida. We have the best facilities available in a 5\* hotel (The Ritz Carlton) at a very convenient price because it is prior to the winter season, a Kosher caterer and the best weather.

Our region is changing as we are seeing a great influx of young people — this is no longer to be considered a place for retirees or for vacation only.

I am also proud to present a check in the amount of \$3,600 from the Southeast Region Cantors Assembly as our contribution to the National Assembly

Respectfully submitted,  
David Feuer, Chairperson

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**REPORT OF THE SEABOARD REGION**

Our meetings alternate between metropolitan Washington and Baltimore every other month. Some of the programs were:

- Discussion of various Cantorial tapes
- Role of the C.A. in synagogue politics
- Video tapes of Jewish Music from around the world
- The music of Pesach
- Dealing with learning disabled students

Special concerts:

In Northern Virginia by 5 regional cantors and 2 cantorial students for the Friends of the J.T.S. This was the first of its kind in Northern Virginia.

Cantor Lubin plus four other cantors at his shul to raise funds for Cantorial Students to study in Israel for a year.

Cantor Saul Hammerman will retire this year. We were deeply saddened by the death of Sam Rosenbaum.

Election of new regional officers will take place in June.

Respectfully submitted,  
Calvin K. Chizever, Chairperson



## Memorial to Samuel Rosenbaum z'l

Hazzanim Robert Kieval, Rockville, MD; Ivan Perlman, Boca Raton, FL;  
Gregory Yaroslav, San Bernardino, CA

*Hazzan Samuel Rosenbaum on tape:*

My name is Samuel Rosenbaum. I'm a cantor. I've been a cantor for a little more than forty years. In those times I've seen a lot of changes in the role of the cantor. I imagine that many people, even today, when they hear the name 'cantor' think of the greats of the 1920s - Yossele Rosenblatt, Mordechai Herschman, Gershon Sirota - great and glorious names. But they were different kinds of cantors than I am. For the most part, they chanted services once a month, they chanted before people who were starved for music and who had no other access to it. For the rest of the time they had to work pretty hard, to go from city to city to make appearances in order to earn a living. Today things are different. The role of the cantor is much more than just singing. It has become a clergyman's position. The areas of service have widened, the areas of responsibility have widened. And so being a cantor is more than just singing...

...Nothing is ever lost - not a drop of rain, not a grain of sand, not a breath of air entirely disappears. When in the fall a leaf falls to the ground, in short order it becomes part of the earth again - even as we are destined to become. How much more precious than a drop of rain or a leaf or a breath of air is a soul. The Almighty in His wisdom has promised that no soul, no leaf, will ever be lost. When the time comes that a soul drops from our midst, we as partners of God in creation must lend a hand and save that soul from oblivion by remembering. Each year we recall in our Convention with pride, love and respect the names of our colleagues who have passed on over the years. But unhappily every year a new group of colleagues joins that Assembly on high. And so we gather together at this special time to explore their memories while those memories are still fresh...

*Hazzan Robert Kieval:*

Each of us has our own memories of Sam and our own connection with him. Gaynor and I have been close with Sam for many years, but there were many other people who were close with Sam, and one of those is Sam Adler the composer and chairman of the Department of Composition at Eastman Rochester. He could not be here today but he sent a note and a piece of music that he asked Gaynor to sing. It's a poem by the Israeli poet Margalit Sofir, with music by Samuel Adler, called Dear Friend:

*It's such scant evidence I have of you,  
Some music here, some words, a bit of gold,  
Enough to tuck away inside a box,  
Not higher than those packs of cigarettes we shared back then,  
Nor bigger than my hand.  
Completely disproportionate, these things which I can hold,  
So few compared to what I carry around inside  
Not possibly contained in any case of any shape*

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*Expanding out like rays which light my face  
When I've been stirred by you through word or touch.  
You've said as much and said so much  
'Actions speak louder than words' we learned, when we were learning all these axioms  
of life  
I can only let soar my fantasies of what could have been  
Might have  
Wish I'd  
You - even back then I always knew  
I was only there in the interim*

*Hazzan Ivan Perlman:*

We have a young man who grew up in Sam's congregation and was inspired by Sam, Greg Yaroslaw:

*Hazzan Greg Yaroslaw:* My dear colleagues and friends, I'm greatly honored to have been asked to speak this morning, yet this is the one task I have dreaded for quite some time and one which I wish from the deepest precincts of my heart and soul did not have to be. I've always, for my entire life, been Sam's student. I was absolutely devastated when I heard the awful news of Sam's untimely death. I had lost my anchor - he was my teacher, mentor, counselor, and my friend.

While each of us has our own memories of Sam, I think I'm in a unique position. Growing up in Rochester at Temple Beth El, my earliest memories of Sam began there at the age of three, seated next to my father *alav hashalom*, who pointed to the words in the siddur as Sam chanted them. I was completely enchanted. I remember waking up one shabbat morning a few years later to find my parents watching TV only to discover the horrifying scene of my shul being engulfed in flames and Sam helping the fireman rescue the *sifrei Torah*.

I'm truly blessed by having been one who went from being a somewhat timid Hebrew School and bar mitzvah student through Sam's Junior Cantors' Club and Megillah and Torah reading groups to Junior Congregation leader, using the melodies and nusah Sam lovingly wrote out for us, to being a bar/bat mitzvah tutor at the young age of fourteen and a half, and much more at High School, College and finally the Cantors Institute. I will never forget Sam keeping eighty or ninety b'nei mitzvah in line, long before such actions could be cause for concern, with a flick off the end of his chalk which hit the offender at the very back of the room squarely between the eyes!...

The nameplate on his desk which read "Simon Legree" and the rampant rumors of his torture techniques - something about being hung up in the boiler room with ice picks from the ears ... or if one were to make too many mistakes, to have the right earlobe made longer than the left... These spoke volumes to impressionable, if naive, students. Each succeeding generation would dutifully pass on these and other bits of homegrown midrash. The experience of working with Sam as a master teacher, however, taught me much about working with students, valuable lessons upon which I still heavily rely. To this very day, a bullwhip hangs in menacing silence in my office and my students now tell its story. My mother tells of her and my father *zichrono livracha* sitting at a Temple dinner with Sam. He told her he was pleased at being able to have the option to threaten recalcitrant students with being sent to me for tutoring if they didn't



shape up. My mother started to laugh and said I would threaten them with being sent to him! I followed the path Sam consciously or unconsciously laid out for me - I knew by the age of seventeen I wanted to be a cantor because Sam made the words of our tefilot come alive with music, poetry and magic. Sam guided me through the admissions process at JTS, making sure I was accepted, angrily calling New York when I told him how they had treated me.

Whenever conflicts arose between the students and the administration each time I challenged the Seminary to improve the C.I. program, Sam went to bat for me. I always knew we had his support which of course came with the full weight of the Assembly. But I suppose it was a two-way street - we had Sam, and he had an insider. It wasn't until I graduated from JTS and became a member of this Assembly that I even began to feel comfortable calling him 'Sam' - a reticence grounded in early memories and images of his imposing stature. In 1972 we asked Sam to officiate at my grandfather's funeral. When the time came for the unveiling I was just beginning my studies at JTS and I didn't know what to do, I really wasn't sure that I could - Sam insisted that I do it and gave me not only the knowledge but the courage to do so.

And then in 1995 when it became necessary to request comfort care only for our beloved father we again turned to Sam. My sister writes of Sam hurrying to mother's house in typical Rochester winter weather, like a member of the family - just as we thought of him - to the back door, not the front. She tells of the man before whom we had trembled as students who, not wishing to walk on the carpet in his boots, yet who had come to give us comfort and strength and guidance, sat in our living room in his stocking feet.

I will never forget the moving tribute Sam paid my father, the zechut and kavod he accorded one so dear. My family and I are ever grateful to Sam for including my father, whom many of you remember, in the Yizkor at our Convention that year, by asking Ivan Perlman to read part of Sam's eloquent eulogy. As far as we can remember, that was the first time that anyone who was neither a hazzan nor a member of the Assembly was included in the hesped.

There are two things I think I will miss the most: first, my own private annual meeting with Sam, almost a personal pilgrimage. As I drove across the country visiting family, friends and colleagues, Sam always made time available to discuss a wide variety of issues. He would listen and respond, and I would relish being at least for the moment the sole beneficiary of his extraordinary insight and even gems from his music library.

Second: No matter what occurred during the year, I knew I could always pick up the phone, and Sam would be there, not only to calm me down, but to solve the problem quickly and brilliantly. Years ago, Sam wrote of the tear-stained mahzor, the tears of our pious ancestors mingling with our own on the page open to Kol Nidre, and I stand here now, our tears inextricably joined in this terrible, terrible loss, almost too much to bear. I take solace in knowing Sam would want us to continue to build on the foundations he laid down, and to strive to achieve the goals he articulated so eloquently in all that he said and did. As we continue the process of taking leave of our beloved *ne'im zmirot Yisrael*, our beloved Sam, I can only pray *Hashem oz le'amo yiten, Hashem yevarekh et amo vashalom*, may the Eternal grant us all the strength we need and may we be blessed with healing and wholeness, with shalom, Amen.

*Hazzan Ivan Perlman:*

Before I begin my hesped, I promised to read the words of someone who in the past number of years was so close to Sam, and that's our own beloved Abe Shapiro:

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Once in a generation the Almighty gives us a gift and puts on this earth a person whose purpose is to lead and make a difference. With his passing, part of me has gone too, never to be replaced. We were inseparable for so many years, but not long enough. We shared so many memorable experiences and confidences, for which I am very grateful. He was a most loving and devoted best friend to me. His intellect, integrity, sensitivity and e.s.p. made him a very special person. His moral principles, never to be compromised, and his adherence to the truth, were rare qualities. But it was his genuineness and humility that made people from all walks of life respond to him with friendship and respect. His magnetic smile reflected his God-given gift of caring and kindness. His love of learning was innate and all-encompassing, as was his profound appreciation of the arts - music, theatre and of course hazzanut. How fortunate that I was able to share these interests with him.

His responsibility was far beyond the call of duty. As a mentor he imparted his own life experiences, motivating and inspiring so many whose lives were turned around by his influence. The world is a lesser place without him. In his 77 years Sam touched thousands of souls, from children to senior citizens, from colleagues to teachers and friends. His humanity, his kindness and caring inspired us all. I miss him, but he will never be gone. May he rest in peace.

Hazzan Dr Samuel Rosenbaum, Executive Vice-President of the Cantors Assembly, the largest international organization of cantors in the world - who was this giant of a man? In the almost half-century that I have known, loved and respected him, the only time I ever heard his voice raised was when he was narrating one of his own, now classic creations. He was a gentle man, a tender man, sweet, kind and soft. His annual report was always lengthy and informative, but never long enough for us as we sat spell-bound. He delivered his report in a soft tone that at its conclusion was met with thunderous applause and standing ovation.

We are taught that Man was created in the image of God. The Almighty is a God of justice and mercy - these same attributes could be in the realm of mankind. In truth, with floods, volcanoes, hurricanes and tornadoes, which are not in the power of man, I have at times questioned in the most respectful manner the justice and mercy of our Creator. I have never questioned the justice and mercy of Sam's relationship to any and all of us, since every decision involving a wayward colleague was tempered with love and compassion - ask any president who had the privilege to work side by side with him.

For over twenty years my family enjoyed our summers on Cape Cod. For about eighteen of these years, Sam's family joined us for most or part of these summers. At times too we were joined by Moe and Ros Silverman. If Moe z'l were here, he would attest to the fact that while Sam might have been away from Rochester or New York City, he was never on vacation. If he was not creatively writing he was lamenting over the trials and tribulations of one or more of our colleagues. As much as I tried to fill his heart with laughter, there still remained a section of it filled with pain, for the pains of our members. He was always our executive director, our friend and mentor.

We are taught too that only God is perfect. This too then is one of His attributes. I of course, as a good Jew, subscribe to that theory even if I don't fully understand it. While Sam was not divine, I want to compare part of the attribute of perfection to him, which I know you will agree with. In our selection for an executive vice-president of our beloved Assembly, Sam was the perfect man for the position. He could also be described as a perfect gentleman. Every



colleague who has had the honor to serve as president will say the same thing. You were president, not Sam. He was your right hand, your advisor, your unquestioned support. His humble spirit was a trait to behold. I recall when I was president, I had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with another great leader of our movement, Chancellor Gershon Cohen z'l. While I did confide in our past presidents and officers, Sam did not know that I was going to request an honorary doctorate for him. Only to one other, our cherished colleague Max Wohlberg z'l, was the award granted at the time. When my request was granted, Sam was the only one who thought he didn't deserve it. His display of humility then was the same that exemplified his beautiful nature. He was so grateful and proud that he sent me a personal gift which I cherish to this day.

We must all wonder in spite of our devotion to our own families how Sam was able to share his love and time between his congregation, the Cantors Assembly and his precious family. I saw first-hand his love for his beautiful Ina, for whom we wish a refua sheleima, Michael, Judy and David and their extensions. It is a miracle that when he mentioned any of them that even one button remained on his chest.

Some time ago, Seminary Professor Rabbi Seymour Segal z'l said at a university in Rhode Island: "In ten years there will be no cantor and the rabbi will be the token Jew in the community." As you can imagine, I was livid at the time. Did Sam respond in kind? Did Sam even have a temper? Yes, as a matter of fact he did. I saw it on very rare occasions. Let me describe Sam's temper as best I can. It was like my whisper. So many years later, the cantor not only exists, but in spite of difficulties which are found in every walk of life, we are flourishing and stronger than ever. Do you know why? We are taught that God does not destroy the world for the sake of lamed-vovniks in each generation. The world of hazzanut was not destroyed because Sam was our lamed-vovnik.

And now our lamed-vovnik is gone, I can tell you exactly where he is - Sam is in the seventh of heavens. Close your eyes - now through those eyes that dreams appear, look - a chorus of angels. Could it be? They all look so familiar. I know every one of them! And there, up front, an executive-looking angel is directing them. Hark! The Hebrew angels sing, all on perfect pitch, in perfect harmony, their lamed-vovnik has come to join them.

And now, who will fill our need? None of us should be worried. No one will ever fill Sam's shoes, but he or she will successfully fill the position, for we have learned by Sam's example. No, Sam was not divine, he was not my god, but he was my idol, my ideal, my friend, my inspiration. He was the mild-mannered man, my super-hero, who flew to heaven on the wings of prayer and whose cape was fringed at each corner. He epitomized what each of us must strive to become - to benefit God, our people, mankind and each other.

Sam - take with you into eternity the eternal gratitude and love of all of us. Be with God as God has been with you. From the time of our beginning we hazzanim have blessed God. In return, God has blessed us. His blessing to us was known as Hazzan Dr Samuel Rosenbaum, Executive Vice-President of the Cantors Assembly, the largest international organization of cantors in the world.

Amen.

*El Malei* chanted by Hazzan Abraham Lubin

## EL MALEY RACHAMIM

Glantz-Lubin

El maley ra-cham-im sho - chen bam-ro

mim — ham - tze m'-nu-cha n'-cho-na al kan - fey ha - sh' - chi-na b'-ma-a

lot k' - do - shim k' - do - shim u - t' - ho - rim k' - zo - har ha - ra - ki - a me - i-

rim u - maz - hi - rim et nish - mat man-hi -

geinu manhig kneset hahazzanim, hehazzan Simcha ben Yitschak uBrayna shemasa et nafsho al kidush kneset hahazza-

nim v' - she - ha - lach l' - o - la - mo. B' - gan

E - den t' - hey m' - nu - cha - to. La - chen ba - al ha - ra - cha - mim yas - ti

rey - hu b' - se - ter k'na fav l' - o - la - mim, v' - yitz -

ror bitz - ror ha - cha - yim et nish - ma - to A - do - nai hu na - cha - la - to,

ve - ya - nu - ach b' - sha - lom al mish - ka - vo ve - no - mar A - men.



## The Quest For Meaning in Text, Tradition and Liturgy

Professor Tikva Frymer-Kensky

Professor of Hebrew Bible, University of Chicago

Chair: Hazzan Alan Smolen, Elgin, IL

*Hazzan Alan Smolen:*

Dr Avraham Holz once said, "Liturgy is that which lends significance to time." While we often think of liturgy in terms of literary or musical components, it is really a much broader-based, inter-disciplinary field. Our next speaker will look at this in a greater way. Tikva Frymer-Kensky is Professor of Hebrew Bible at the University of Chicago, she has been a Visiting Professor at the JTS and served as Director of Biblical Studies at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College from 1988 through 1994. She is the author of *In the Wake of the Goddesses* and *Motherprayer: The Pregnant Woman's Spiritual Companion*. She is now finishing her new book *Victims, Virgins and Victors*, to be published by Schocken.

*Prof. Frymer-Kensky:*

I want to talk about what has caused the great spiritual hunger that we find quite widespread in the Jewish community. Part of it is caused by the lessening of intellectualism, the collapse of our faith in science because of the Holocaust, nuclear catastrophes and our loss of control over pollution. There has also been a great change in the way we learn humanities and history, a collapse of the idea that there is such a thing as 'one truth' - one objective truth in which German philosophers lead the way and will make us perfect in some future age. We call the rejection of this idea the 'Paradigm Shift' - some people call it Post-Modernism. It has taken a wide range of forms, and in popular culture it has led to phenomena such as New Age religions and the turn to the East. But what has happened in religion is not quite as well known. One reaction has been the phenomenal growth and appeal of Orthodoxies - a place to forget that there is not just one truth and to imagine that the words inscribed years and years ago are literally single in their meaning. But for those who don't go that route, there is still a desire to put the pieces together again, to take the deconstructed shards and to learn something about how religion has meaning for our lives. And that means transforming the religious experience of individuals and congregations.

This has taken different forms. One is the enormous explosion of Jewish Studies. You all know of many places where there are departments of Jewish Studies. Some of them are basically Judaism 101, 102 and 103, a remedial, last-ditch attempt for Jewish children to know their culture, funded by people who didn't have this chance. But when you get beyond that, there are a tremendous number of people taking Ph.Ds in Talmud, Midrash, Bible - not simply as a quest for their own identity, but as a real desire to read the religious classics in the way they were intended to be read. These are very complicated works, whose writers were sophisticated thinkers. What looks like a simple story is full of ambiguities, gaps, word-plays and what we call 'polysemy' - texts capable of many meanings; what the midrash calls *shivim panim latorah*, the seventy faces of Torah.

When I go out to congregations or lay audiences, I find that people are tired of being

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taught the literal, simple form of Bible stories. They come alive when you open up the Dinah story or the Hagar story, or Migdal Bavel - when you show them that the first line translates as "They had one language and very little to talk about...." and that the story of the tower of Babel is about how we became a multiform, multicultural human race. We need to respect our own intelligence and that of the writers of the Bible. When Biblical scholars learned that editors were working with previous traditions, they thought the editors cut and pasted, and were stupid enough to leave traces of the cutting and pasting. Now we say "Why did the editors leave that trace? What hint are they giving us?"

Beyond this, there has been even more vocal activity in a search for sanctifying the events of personal life. A lot of the impetus for this came from feminism. In its search for justice, it began to pay attention to what words meant -that words have meaning and meaning has impact. Feminism went beyond a question of equal access. It became a search for mothers, for some trace of the lives of Jewish women over the last 4000 years, and a search for some sense of what it means to be a body. In other words, we developed an ear for silence - what is not in our liturgy, and why isn't it?

I tell my own story, how I turned from a very rigid scholar of ancient law into a scholar of Jewish matters. And I tell the story of what happened to me the night before my first child was born. I discovered, eight or nine hours in advance, that I would have to have a C-section, and came to the hospital to spend the night in an empty ward usually used for stillbirths. Displacing my anxiety, I worried about what I would do all night rather than about the surgery next morning. So I brought novels, *TV Guide*, and through either lunacy or divine Providence, a file of ancient Babylonian birth incantations. I had that file because I had done a study of the cosmic meaning of water and river, and birth incantations have a lot of water symbolism in them. But I didn't want to distract myself, I wanted to focus, so I spent three hours studying these ancient birth incantations. As I did so, my personal anxiety became submerged in a sense of human history, of 5000 years of women giving birth, having babies. I had to have a general anesthetic, and when I fully woke up (some ten months later) I got angry and I said, Why do I have to go all the way back to the Babylonians to find something to allow my personal anxieties to disappear? And what do the poor women do who can't read Sumerian? Then my anger gave way to a feeling, rather as Mordecai said to Esther, that maybe it was for this reason that I had studied Sumerian and Akkadian and all kinds of crazy languages - maybe I could do something about the silence. So I set out, for seventeen years, to find fragments of liturgy and theology concerning pregnancy and the creation of human beings, and to create a liturgical companion and a theological reflection for the event.

I looked for fragments, and I found, buried in our texts, prayers we had forgotten - prayers for conception, and prayers for safe delivery - but nothing for the months in between. That set me off asking - where else in human personal life were there materials that we had abandoned, and when were they abandoned? I began to keep my eyes open, and found that in prayer books even from the early nineteenth century there were quotations from the *Kitsur Shelah* (not the actual *Shelah*), prayers for events in personal life; in kabbalistic siddurim there were long kavanot for everything from sex, to eating, to putting on shoes. I stopped translating these kavanot because they were so filled with anxiety about allowing the Evil Side to grow. But apart from kavanot were prayers which went beyond the berachah, the prayer formula which



can become so automatic. Some mothering materials could be translated, although most of them needed to be adapted.

Then I found there was a tradition of prayers to say in pregnancy from the seventh month on, and even from the fortieth day. We know this from the re-awakening of interest in Yiddish *tekhines* - petitions in old Yiddish, Judeo-German, which were printed at the beginning of the era of printing. When they were actually composed, we don't know. When I learned about the *tekhines* in school, I was told that most of them were written by Yeshiva bokhers pretending to be women to earn some money. Later, I was told they were the outpourings of women's hearts, the melancholy of Sarah-Rivka-Rachel-Leah. But I discovered that they were part of an important literary tradition. I was fortunate that Chava Weissner handed me photocopies of six *tekhines* to get started. I had to study them slowly. I had to learn to read *vayber-shrift*, the special alphabet used only for women's literature. When you learn something slowly, the imagery and the words stick with you. Around the same time, work was done on Italian prayer books, later published as *Out of the Depths I Call to You*, based on one of several small Books of Hours, manuscripts that were beautifully written and meant to be carried everywhere. These contained prayers written in Hebrew, some with instructions that they be read during the *Amidah* - which tells you something about what was expected of Italian Jewish women. They include prayers for lighting Sabbath candles, for pregnancy, conceptions, and general good fortune. When I looked at a copy of this material, I realized that four of them were the identical prayer that I was reading in the Yiddish *tekhines*, word-for-word translations of one from the other or each from a common source. The prayers had a lot of midrashic allusions, some very rare, such as one about the hole that God cut in His throne so that He could hear the prayers of Menasheh after the Angels stopped up the regular pipelines for prayer because they didn't want Menasheh to be able to repent. The Hebrew prayer contains a lot of Aramaic, so it's my feeling that there was a literary tradition perhaps from Sefad, perhaps even earlier, with some kabbalistic ideas - about the *sitra ahra* (the Other Side), the *zera kadisha* (the Holy Seed). These prayers may later have spread around Europe, maybe sold by wandering preachers. We know of one such preacher, David Darshan, who traveled from Italy to Poland to work in the printing presses, carrying with him a personal library of 400 books (which for those days is incredible). And just as our great scholars wrote amulets to earn their living, they probably wrote prayers for all personal occasions - the birth of a child, the desire for conception, maybe a bar mitzvah, a wedding. This tradition continued a long time and disappeared because those in charge of printing decided these prayers weren't worthy of printing. Hebrew Books of Hours for women were never printed because Soncino did not think it high enough Jewish literature. So that whole tradition died until it was rediscovered in the library.

We now have recovered several ancient traditions. In addition to the *tekhines* and the Italian prayerbooks, we have amulets - which are prayers in a visual form, with words which are initials for 'Sheimot'. These initials, usually of verses in the Bible, are placed artistically through micrography around some symbol that represents the desired result. You could think of it as magic, or as a multi-media prayer like the *sheviti* which says "I place You yud-hei-vav-hei before me always" and there it is, yud-hei-vav-hei before you.

There were many events for which I could not find traces in the midrashim or *tekhines* or Italian prayer books. What I wound up doing was taking a verse or a midrash and creating a

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textured poem, using the liturgical language of the past being used in a new form - I call that 'Recombinant Theological Engineering'. To create de novo, as if there is no tradition that can provide a communal language, is to impoverish ourselves. While creating these birth and pregnancy prayers, I found myself developing (without knowing I was doing it) a theology of the human being, a religious anthropology. Over and over, I would find a verse about Jerusalem, which would strike me as important: Jerusalem, it is said, guards her children in her midst - it is round and reaches to the sky - the arena in which the Shekhina works for humanity. When I looked at these traditional verses upside down they became for me the natural verses to express what is happening in a woman's body as she gets rounder, and her stomach begins to look like the domes of Jerusalem and God guards the children within her. The language of Hallel, especially Psalm 116, and also Psalm 119 - about walking in the path of life and being removed from the cords of death - seems to me to be applicable to the voice of a child. I wrote a poem using these phrases and then found an obscure Yiddish tekhele which did the same thing - that was very gratifying..

There are messianic verses which talk about the child to come - every child is a potential mashiach, and in fact every child is anointed in the birth process. I don't want to belabor pregnancy - pregnancy is only one avenue we have to realize the spiritual richness of personal experience- and I began to look elsewhere, at other occasions in which texts can suddenly shed light on what it really is to be a human being, to be in the image of God - a phrase that usually just falls trippingly off our lips; and what it means to be shutaf - a partner. I found a wonderful midrash in Pesikta DeRav Kahana comparing point by point the travails of Jerusalem at her destruction as expressed in Eicha with the sufferings of Job in the first two chapters of Job. At that time the parallel was created to make people aware how important the sufferings of Jerusalem are. Today we know Jerusalem is holy - we have talked about its sufferings for two thousand years. Turn it upside down, and we have a text that shows us that the suffering of every human being is like the suffering of Jerusalem. It casts light on what we say to a mourner: 'May the Makom comfort you among the mourners of Jerusalem' - you who mourn for a single person are in the class of those who mourn for the Temple and the city.

Then we have a wonderful talmudic sentence: Whoever is present at the death of a human being tears his clothes just as at the burning of a sefer Torah, because the death of a human being is like the destruction of a sefer Torah. If you think about that, that is extraordinary - the Torah is a record of the working of the Shekhina, and the human being is the living expression of the same working of the Shekhina.

What do we do with all this? It is the scholar's job to ferret out these verses, the poet-theologian's to put them together. But they need to be infused with context. I was going to talk about what has happened in music with the growth of spirituality - the Debbie Friedman phenomenon - but beyond that, people like ideas. They want a liturgy that has meaning. Our fixed liturgy - the Shema, the Amidah, and especially the High Holyday liturgy - has metaphors which if we think about them don't fit the modern world. And that's all right, because the liturgical moment is a step into the eternal stream of tradition, and doesn't have to be an intellectual expression of contemporary ideas. But we also need other liturgical modes, special prayers, additions to the service. We need to have a moment to express in the spirit, in music, what the brain wants to say. This is where hazzanim come in more than the scholars and rab-



bis, because they have a sense of liturgy as a living interaction between people. The best hazanim know how to work with people, to give dramatic, emotional expression to new situations that is still in the language and nusah of tradition. We need to overcome our fears that people are scared of change, or that anything learned will turn them off, because in fact they are hungry for learning that is meaningful.

The ‘mavens’, the distributors of the culture, don’t acknowledge people’s desire for learning. Books get written that you never hear of, that you can’t find in bookstores, because the mavens have decided they’re too learned for the amcha. It is our job to let you know about these books and to write them, for we all need to keep in mind that our congregations can be enriched by them. My major purpose in coming here today is to let you know that the old days, when the intellectuals in the seminary and academe cared only for the pure antiquarian thrill of discovering texts - those days are over. Nobody I know who spends their life passionately learning Jewish texts is so removed from the Jewish community that they don’t want to bring their knowledge out and help transform Judaism. As you know, being an academic is an occupation with no financial reward, no fame, and very little honor and prestige, and Jewish Studies academics are at the bottom of the heap in all of those perks. The reason people are going into Jewish Studies more and more is this great challenge of Torah - to dance with the Torah and make her part of every minute of life. We Jews are sacred beings - as are other nations, in their own way. We are people who sanctify time. Shabbat may come at 5:17, but Shabbat will not be holy unless we say kiddush. We are partners in creation as we declare the time of holidays, we sanctify the Shabbat. We make the sefer Torah holy in our writing - till then it’s just parchment. To do this we have to make ourselves holy, to feel the holiness all around us, and the only way to do that is liturgically. We have a choice: Jews will express themselves in a simple outpouring of emotion in English, or with new liturgy created by the trained interchange between learning and spirituality that produces the kind of kavanot and liturgical acknowledgements that make life sacred.

I want to read to you a few of the poems that mark the re-creation of a human being. For technical details of origin and meaning, see *Motherprayer: The Pregnant Woman’s Spiritual Companion*, Riverhead Books, New York, 1995.

The first is “The Doe and the Fiery Creatures”, my translation from the Hebrew of the Italian prayerbooks and the Yiddish of the tekhnies:

*Please, O Lord of Hosts:  
Look upon the suffering of Your servant  
and remember and do not forget Your servant,  
and give Your servant human seed.*

*May the God of Israel grant me my petition  
Your servant implores you  
as a doe yearns at the water courses  
at the time that she seeks to give birth  
and her pains grow hard upon her.  
She yearns for You with her horns*

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*and bitterly cries for Your mercy.*

*For the key of birthing is in Your hand.  
You pity her and open her womb  
in compassion and loving kindness.*

*Just so my soul yearns for You, O God,  
and asks for Your mercy and loving kindness  
to open the hinges of my womb  
so that I may give birth  
to the birthling within me  
in an hour appropriate for birth  
at a time of blessing and salvation.  
With a living child,  
so that I do not struggle for naught,  
labor in vain, God forbid.  
In Your hand alone is the key of birthing  
as it is written  
“And God remembered Rachel  
and listened to her  
and opened her womb.”*

*May you be moved by my petition  
as from the depths of my heart  
I call upon the Lord.  
My voice calls to You:  
answer me from Your holy mountain. Selah.  
Listen to my prayer,  
and may the entreaty  
that I call before You in full heart  
come before You in friendship and happiness.*

*The angels above  
who are appointed over the birthstool  
who are noble fire  
and called yesirot [creatures]*

[May the spirits appointed over the birth  
stool  
who are called in heaven yetedot  
take the voices of women  
and place them before that palace  
when the Other Side comes to prosecute.



At that hour,  
which is an hour of danger-  
They arise and lift their voices  
before the one who is appointed over  
the door  
and the Other Side cannot prosecute.]

*My prayer comes to You:  
You commanded us to be fruitful and multiply  
And to raise children for Torah and mitzvot  
to stand before You,  
serve You and bless Your name.*

*Do not allow space for the Other Side  
to accuse me or the fruit in my belly.  
Remember me for good,  
Do not forget Your servant,  
Give Your servant a holy living seed.*

*The Lord of Hosts is with us,  
the God of Jacob is our fortress, Selah.* (Ps. 46:12)

*O Lord of Hosts,  
blessed be the person who trusts in You. (Ps. 84:13)  
The Lord redeems, the King answers us on the day we call. (Ps. 19:15)*

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The next is my own poem, a prayer for labor based on the many times the bible compares emotions to the pangs of a laboring woman, *hil kayoleda*. I asked myself, ‘What do we learn about pangs if we turn the metaphor backwards to see what is compared to it?’

*LIKE A BIRTHING WOMAN*

*On coming to Jerusalem, kings stand in wonder  
trembling seizes them - hil kayoleda. (Ps. 48:7)*

*It is not the stone that is astonishing  
Babylon is bigger  
Nineveh is stronger  
Rome is more powerful.*

*It is the nearness of the Presence  
the greatness of the Presence  
the awesome might of God - hil kayoleda. (Ps.48:7)*

*Today - a sudden tightening,  
my body shakes,  
my fingers tremble.  
The time has come.*

*On the high mountain of my pain I climb,  
I who brings glad tidings.  
I lift my voice with strength,  
I cry aloud,  
Behold our God! (Isa. 40:9)*

*Sound the trumpet, for I hear the rushing of a  
mighty force.  
I howl: the divine day is at hand. (Isa. 13:4-9)  
The coming of the Lord shakes the earth -  
shakes the people,  
shakes the soul.  
We howl, we quake, our faces flame.  
We feel the power of the divine host.  
My hands grow limp,  
my heart is trembling,  
pangs and throes -hil kayoleda.*

*It is in battle that men have felt this power,  
felt the trembling,  
the coming of God,*



*the danger and the glory of the cosmic forces.*

*Sound the trumpet! they have called,  
Sound the alarm,  
The day of the Lord comes and is near. (Joel 2:6)  
The nations tremble,  
the hills tremble,  
the earth shakes.  
A mighty force is coming.  
The men of Israel heard,  
The king of Babylon heard the mighty hordes.  
His hands also trembled - hil kayoleda.*

*Scream! for I, too, hear the sound of mighty  
combat,  
The battle is on!  
The forces near!  
Like a rocking war chariot,  
like a bucking plow,  
I feel the movement,  
the heat,  
the sweat,  
the dust of battles swirls around me.  
I feel the coming of God's mighty force.  
I tremble and quake - hil kayoleda.*

*A mighty force is coming,  
in awe, in terror;  
I pray that I will not bear wind, (Isa. 26:18)  
that the child can bear the battle, (Hos. 13:13)  
that in the wake of this great coming,  
God will leave our blessing. And in the terror and the struggle of this great battle  
I work for life.*

The last item, instead of a collage of Biblical verses, is a meditation on a midrash from Tanhuma - a perfectly ghastly midrash. The Midrash says: 'All of Israel who are circumcised enter Paradise, for the Holy Blessed One placed His name on Israel so that they should enter Paradise. And what is the name and the seal of the name He placed upon them: "Shaddai". He placed the letter *shin* in the nose, the letter *daled* in the hand, and *yod* at the circumcision'. The reason I say this Midrash is terrible is - what about the uncircumcised and the uncircumcisable - like women? But the Midrash has something important to say. *Yod* is not the shape of circumcision but of the organ, the hook-shaped male organ, and this is the shape also of the clitoris. The purpose that the penis shares with the clitoris is sensation- the passion, the sensation

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that liberates us from the estrous cycle, that makes us able to perform sex as an act of love and not simply as an act of calendar. Once we realize this, then the midrash takes on a new form and becomes a rather profound explanation of the fact that it is not just that we have the spark of God within bodies of flesh, but that the very flesh itself is the mark of the name of God.

*SHADDAI*

*It is the twelfth week of gestation,  
fourteen weeks in the counting.  
A body grows and becomes.  
There, on its form, is stamped its destiny:  
To be a person,  
image of God,  
partner in creation,  
lover of the world.*

*The body in which it will know life  
is taking shape.  
On the face there is a nose.  
The human nose, beacon of the face.  
The nose that breathes the air of the world,  
smells the creation,  
tastes the pleasures of life.  
The nose of the human being stretches forward from the face.  
Not a beak,  
not a snout,  
center bone and two nostrils - the letter shin - sha.*

*From the body stretch forth the arms and the hands,  
the humanoid arms and hands.  
Marks of us creatures who stand upright.  
With these arms we reach,  
we lift,  
we carry,  
we hold.  
We stretch forth our arm, we bend it. We hold others to us, body to body, face to face.*

*And as we reach with our arm, our hand stretches forward,  
the humanoid hand,  
able to write, to grasp, to feel, to caress.  
Four fingers and a thumb,  
playing the music of the world:  
Hands writing the wisdom of the world,  
Hands molding the creation.*



*Hands touching each other in love and sharing.*

*Wondrous arms, with bends and angles, wondrous hands with bends and angles.  
The bent arm - the letter daled  
the fingers and thumb - a daled  
the bend of the fingers - a daled  
Shin and daled - shadd.*

*And finally, at the core, a letter yod.  
A boy's yod is open in front.  
A girl's yod is hidden, in her midst.  
The yod.  
Site of a joy not bounded by time,  
site of a love that knows no seasons.  
The yod of a human being:  
future-creator,  
pleasure-bringer,  
binder of love.  
A gift from God of God's own name,  
for us to use in love of God.*

Shin, daled, yod,  
Shaddai.  
*The great Almighty of our ancestors  
has sealed this divine name on our bodies.*  
Shaddai.  
*Every child comes with the name of God.  
Blessed be the one who comes in the name of God. (Ps. 118:26)  
Blessed be the child,  
Blessed be God.  
Shaddai.*

*(poems reprinted by kind permission of the author)*

*(On a question regarding translation of Motherprayer into Hebrew):*  
It hasn't happened yet. It would be a good idea because so many of the verses are quotes. I believe it's been translated into Portuguese.  
Some women from a synagogue gift shop wanted to get copies of *Motherprayer* but they couldn't deal with the publisher because the quantities they wanted to order were too small, and the distributor said: "I don't handle pregnancy." So none of the synagogue gift shops, run by women, could have it! *Motherprayer* wasn't supposed to be called the 'Pregnant Woman's Companion', the subtitle was the publisher's idea. But pregnancy books don't get reviewed. Barnes and Noble are always out of stock, because they order two copies and they disappear.

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Then when you tell them, they'll first order another two!

(*Question about bringing new ideas into the Conservative movement*):

One of the best ways is to stop assuming that when you have a weekend speaker, a scholar would be too arcane and obscure and therefore have yet another journalist talking about the situation in Israel. The synagogue should be a place of intellectual excitement about Judaism.

(*Question about creating new prayers*):

It's very hard. The Rabbanut had it right once, with the Prayer for the State of Israel, with *reishit tsmihat ge'ulateinu*, 'the beginning of the flowering of our redemption' which was Rabbi Kook's phrase. Adopting that just hit the yearnings of the people, and people liked saying it. It became a more or less permanent addition to the liturgy. Other prayers that have been tried haven't lasted - they proved transitory. I think there should be a place, let's say one shabbat a month, or once every two months, where there is nothing taken away from the liturgy but one new prayer is tried. It could be based on one of the newer metaphors for God, like "God as friend". Or one of the older ones, like "God as partner in our desire to..." Some of these new prayers will fall flat on their faces, but when you hit the right one, it will resonate with the community and they will want to say it again. I also recommend a 'gevalt minyan', a safe place where people can *shrei gevalt*, and say what's bothering them, and complain. This is an old tradition - but most of our people don't know that it's permitted to complain to God. Moreover, the person suffering wants some community support. Take a daily minyan, maybe once a month, and make it a 'gevalt minyan'. It's worth a try. There should be a fair amount of brainstorming as to little things we can do to create in our synagogue involvement a place that we go to not only to visit the eternal Judaism but also to dance with it today.

(*Question about including reference to the Imahot along with the Avot in the Amidah*):

The decision to do this rests with each rabbi and community, not 'higher up'. The Rabbinical Assembly said it is permissible, the decision whether to do it or not rests with the congregation. The siddur is a combination of rabbinic and medieval theology, and one of the definite movements of the rabbinic period was to render women invisible. We understand the reasons why they did it. One was that the cultural milieu of the Greco-Roman period was extremely sex-phobic, and imagined that the yetser hara, which has different names in different languages, was uncontrollable, and men would turn into beasts. Another was the desire to have space: as the men of Israel were hemmed in by Rome and lost more and more of their external autonomy, they tried to create a space in which they could be powerful - the gavra raba, the 'mighty man' who is the man who studies Torah. The space they used was the bet midrash and the synagogue. They didn't put women in the liturgy because they never saw women, they were living in a world without women for most of their day. Pre-rabbinic Torah has a lot about women, therefore we have the language and a sense of authenticity to bring back stuff from Tanach now that we're not so hemmed in by the Greco-Roman period, now that we're not so scared of sex, and Jewish men don't feel so desperately put on by the world.

(*Question about the emphasis on the male children of Jacob as described in Bereishit*):

Patriarchy, male dominance in society and in literary traditions, seems to begin with the neolithic revolution. It's well entrenched by the time we have writing. We can see it intensifying with the growth of states in the third millennium BCE, and even more with some of the tech-



nological advances in the second millenium. By the time Israel came along, the only society it knew was a hierarchical society which included both patriarchy and slavery. "The Torah spoke in the language of people," language that people could understand. The Torah even has provisions for slavery. When the Rabbis came along they said, "Times have changed, we understand now there shouldn't be slavery," and they got rid of slavery. Now there's a struggle for people to say once again, "We understand now, times have changed again, there shouldn't be patriarchy." A thousand years from now, what will we discover that we are doing wrong now? I can guess - the way we treat chimpanzees is wrong, tsar baalei chayim, and we will change the sense of humans being so separate from the animal world.

(*Comment about congregations writing their own prayers in their own notebooks*):  
In the last ten years we have seen the development of beautiful Tu Bishvat seders from nothing. We can do it when there is the spirit. We can do some beautiful liturgical things.

## **The Faith, Prayer and Spiritual Health of the Seekers for God**

**Rabbi Professor Neil Gillman  
Jewish Theological Seminary**

### *Introduction:*

We are very privileged to have with us an esteemed member of the Seminary Faculty. Dr Gillman is the Aaron Rabinowitz-Simon Rifkind Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Jewish Philosophy at the Jewish Theological Seminary. A native of Quebec City, Dr Gillman graduated from McGill University, was ordained at the Seminary and received his PhD from Columbia University in 1975. His book *Sacred Fragments: Recovering Theology for the Modern Jew* (JPS) won the 1991 National Book Award in Jewish thought. His *Conservative Judaism: A New Century* was published by Behrman in 1993. Dr Gillman's new book *The Death of Death: Resurrection and Immortality in Jewish Thought* was published by Jewish Lights Publishing this year. Dr Gillman has served as Scholar-in-Residence at many congregations around the country and has provided a generation of students with a great deal to consider and much help.

### *Rabbi Dr Gillman:*

Some thirty years ago, Dr Abraham Heschel delivered a talk at a Cantors Assembly convention, subsequently published in the book which was first called *Man's Quest for God*, which in the era of political correctness came to be called *Quest For God*, and now is again *Man's Quest For God*. I tell my students that nothing has been written on prayer that even begins to come close to that talk. I urge you to reread it. It's an honor to be part of a line of speakers at the CA convention in which my teacher, Professor Heschel, was the outstanding member. I will pick up on some of the themes that Heschel sounded in that lecture - they are very much alive in our day.

I think Sam Rosenbaum wanted me to give this address because he wanted me to 'diss' spirituality. He was not very subtle sometimes. He walked into my office and told me what I should say. I sat and listened politely and said, 'Sam, you're not giving me a script for my talk are you?' He said, 'Would I do that? I think I trust you. I've read what you've written so I know what you're going to say.' I don't know if he would be completely happy with what I'm going to say, but he did sense my discomfort with the term 'spirituality' and I think that's one of the reasons he wanted me here. But rather than simply 'diss' spirituality - 'diss' is a new word I learned from my students - I want to place the issue of what I call 'the new spirituality' within a broader context.

I don't know why I'm uncomfortable with the term 'spirituality' but my students all know never to use the term in my class. Maybe it's because of my age, or my gender, or temperament or training, but it raises for me the issue of authenticity. What is the authentic Jew?

If I asked Judaism: What is it that God demands of me above all? What is my most profound form of self-expression as a Jew? At what moments do I feel most authentically Jewish, part of my tradition, closest to God? I find there are three classical Jewish answers, three models of authenticity: the behavioral, the intellectual, and the spiritual.



Each is fully supported by classical texts. Each is institutionalized in a certain kind of synagogue or school. Each has a curriculum which leads to the education and formation of the ideal Jew. Each is most noticeable when it becomes a caricature. I'm going to paint caricatures today, because that's the only way you can properly capture the actual model. Each is in tension with the other. It's very difficult to find all three together in any one person or at any one time. There's a shift back and forth. When in balance, each enriches Jewish life, but that's very rare, and each leads to problems. Let me speak briefly about each one.

The behavioral answer to the question is, God demands doing - behavior, activity. It is rooted in the notion of Covenant, brit. A covenant has its law codes. Whenever our classical literature speaks of brits it immediately spells out a series of doings - activities, laws, mitzvot, commands that you have to do. Obligated behavior becomes the defining mark of Jewish authenticity. You get an intense concentration on fulfilling the mitzvot - 613, mark you, not 612, not 614. One more or less makes a big difference in how I feel about myself as a Jew. If I were a 'behaviorist' I would be painfully aware that every moment has its opportunity for a mitzvah or for an averah. In its exaggerated form as a caricature, theology is irrelevant. How often do I hear this in the classrooms at the Seminary: 'Forget about God, it doesn't make any difference what you believe - did you put on tefillin this morning?' Kavanah is irrelevant: if it's 5:08 and you have to daven minha but you don't feel like it - who cares about what you feel, you daven minha, because that's the mitzvah.

Aggadah is dismissed - it's nice, but the really important stuff in the study of Gemara is what do you do when your cow walks into somebody else's field? That's really where God comes into the picture and is concerned.

There is a wonderful example of this in David Bleich's first anthology of teshuvot. He quotes a posek who talks about a doctor who is forced to drive on Shabbat: how can he do so while minimizing the number of hilul shabat mitzvot that he has to be *oveir* on. For example: you don't use the brake pedal, because that lights the light at the back; you stop the car with the handbrake. You don't use directional signals; you unscrew the overhead dome light on Friday afternoon; you leave your keys in the car so you don't have to carry them; you take the spare out of the trunk because that leads to more weight which needs more gas which makes the engine ignite more frequently...and on and on. I think this is Purim Torah, but to a 'behaviorist' it is not - it is exactly what God wants. God wants meticulous behavior. My sense is that there is such a thing also as a Reform behaviorist, or a UJA behaviorist. That person spends all of his time doing - a whirlwind of activity from morning till night on behalf of UJA, Federation - whatever cause is on the front burner today. There is not much thinking about 'Why am I doing this?', not much theology or ideology. Heschel reserved some of his sharpest attacks for this 'behaviorism'. He called it 'religious behaviorism' - a very felicitous term. The behaviorists are all over the place these days. There is more behaviorism at the Seminary today than there ever was in my years. This year the Megillah reading was Motzei Shabbat. At the Seminary it was a 6:45 Maariv-Megillah reading, right at the end of Shabbat, and there was a big 8:30 student Megillah reading and blast. In the announcement there was a little sidebar which said: 'If you plan to attend the 8:30 Megillah reading, note that Shabbat ends at 6:45. Either daven and say havdallah at 6:45, or do not do any work until we say Maariv at 8:30, because it will still be Shabbat till then.' I said, Those who care don't have to be told. For those

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who don't care, it makes no difference if you tell them. But the mentality that says you have to put this on a notice board is part of a classical behaviorist stance.

For the 'intellectualist', the answer to 'What does God demand of me most?' is: the mind, study. *Talmud Torah keneged kulam*. God's will is in a book, therefore you have to study the book. The primary mitzvah, the primary gateway to doing anything is by learning. Notice in this model you never know. You either 'learn' or you 'know how to learn'. The greatest compliment a yeshiva bocher can pay to another is: 'He knows how to learn.' Study becomes a form of worship. Finklestein: 'When I pray, I speak to God; when I study, God speaks to me.' *Ein am ha'aretz hasid* - the matmid is the idol, he sits in the yeshivah from early dawn till late at night, he never sees the outside world, totally immersed in study. Intellectual perfection above all - that is what Moshe Rabbeinu achieved, what Aristotle achieved, what Maimonides believed he had achieved.

Now intellectualism is very familiar to me because I think that's what I am. I came into Judaism on the wings of theology. I was one of the very few students who was happy at the Seminary, because I didn't expect the Seminary to give me anything else but intellectual stimulation, that's what I needed and it was not lacking. My sense was that even the Wissenschaft model, which ruled at the Seminary, and continues to rule, was a religious experience for that generation of scholars. When H. L. Ginsberg tore a chapter of Isaiah apart in order, as we said, to rewrite it as Isaiah would have written it had he known as much Hebrew as 'H. L.' knew - that was a genuinely religious experience for him. He didn't talk about it, he didn't flaunt it, it was in and of itself. The sheer exercise of the mind in the search for p'shat - the Seminary's whole insistence on 'What is the p'shat of the text?' - this is what you got after a class with H. L. Ginsberg, whatever else you didn't get. And you didn't get in any way a sense of 'Why are we studying Isaiah in the first place? What are you supposed to do with it?' But for the first time Isaiah said something.

Another way of looking at these caricature-models is to say, 'What is it that when I do it I don't look at the clock?' At JTS you never looked at the clock when you were studying. You did look at the clock in shul on Shabbat morning when a C.I. student was dreydling musaf, or a rabbinical student was dreydling on with a particularly long sermon...I committed a serious faux pas yesterday when I forgot where I was. I was in an elevator with a group of hazzanim - probably the first time I've been in an elevator with a group of hazzanim. Someone said, 'What's the professor doing at the Cantors Assembly?' I figured it was a snide question and deserved a snide answer, so I answered, 'Wondering how long Sefira is going to take tonight!' Nobody laughed.

I thought afterwards - this is my JTS training, I never looked at the clock when I studied, but God forbid if the service ended after 11:15, they looked at the clock. In its caricature-form, it creates an elitism, it led to the total disparagement by the United Synagogue of the lay community, which is only just beginning to have a significant say in the direction of the movement. More seriously, the JTS intellectualism led to a Rabbinate that is basically trained to be a group of mini-academicians. There was no sense whatsoever that Rabbinical education is anything other than Graduate School education. JTS was Harvard, except that Harvard wasn't creating ministers and JTS was creating rabbis. I said at the beginning that the only people at JTS, certainly in my day, who were happy, were those who never had any intention of becoming a



congregational rabbi - they quickly found out that either they had to retrain themselves to speak in a non-academic format, or that their entire education at JTS had been subverted. They ended up creating congregations that had been trained by academicians, in many ways the kind of congregation that we encounter far too often.

'Spiritualism.' This is of course based on the hasidic mystical model. What does God demand most of all? God demands the heart, passion. The emphasis is on inwardness, emotion. It's Yedid nefesh, it's some of the Psalms, Martin Buber, Heschel. In its caricatured form it emerges in hasidic stories, such as the shepherd in the back of the shul playing on his flute while everyone is davening, and the Rabbi says he's the only one davening with kavanah, he's the only one Hakadosh Barukh Hu listens to. Or the famous aggadah about the shepherd who didn't know Kri'at Shema and Amidah, but wrote his own prayer which said, 'God, I love You so much that if I had to look after Your sheep I wouldn't charge You.' And so one day a good behaviorist rabbi hears him and says, 'That's not prayer!' and teaches him K'riat Shema and Amidah. The shepherd is left totally confused, he can't remember the words, and he knows he's not supposed to say his other prayer, so he doesn't say anything at all. The rabbi is walking along when suddenly the world falls apart - thunder, tornadoes, hail. He senses he's responsible for this, and then he hears a voice, 'You deprived me of the one man in the world that kept the whole world together, go back to him!' So he runs back to the shepherd and asks, 'What are you saying?' and he answers, 'I'm not saying anything, I don't remember the Shema or the Amidah and you told me not to say what I was saying.' So the rabbi pleaded with him: 'Please say what you were saying - that's what God wants.'

Now that of course is a scandalous story, because we do have a Shulchan Arukh, we do have a siddur and Mishneh Torah, and we are supposed to say the Shema twice a day and the Amidah three times a day, and Shabbat is at 5:18 and not whenever the family gets together. There is structure, discipline and law. There is in the 'spiritualist' model a latent antinomianism and certainly a latent anti-intellectualism. As much as Heschel attacked 'religious behaviorism' he attacked what he called the Pauline model, that says that faith, inwardness, is all. He understood that as leading directly to the Holocaust.

Nobody will argue today that spirituality is in. It's Debbie Friedman, Shlomo Carlebach. It's the Family Shabbat services that begin with guitar and a lot of yaba-baba-ba. It's books. It's angels all over the place. I wonder if Ivan could have given his hesped for Sam with reference to angels twenty years ago. Twenty years ago an aggadah about angels would have been laughed out of court. Go to the bargain bookstore across the street from here and see how many books there are about angels. 'The care of the soul' is all over the place - Refaeinu, healing, lifecycles and humash, liturgies and rituals for and by Jewish women...

But the epitome of the spiritualist mentality comes out of the BJ phenomenon - B'nai Jeshurun in Manhattan. When Marshall Meyer died I went to his shiva. Between minha and maariv a woman congregant got up to give the d'var torah, and she said, 'I don't know why I'm here, I've never given a shiva d'var torah before, I don't have a text. Then it occurred to me, what if Marshall were here and I said, "I have to give a d'var torah this evening, I don't have a text, and I don't know what to say." Marshall would have said, "Go with your feelings and the text will follow.'"'

I was standing there and I thought: Now I understand why my students can't talk to me or my

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colleagues on the Faculty. If we would have gone to our teachers and said, ‘I haven’t got a text, I don’t know what to say,’ they would have said, ‘Come, Mr Gillman, let me help you find a text, and the text will enable you to identify your feelings.’

That is the spiritual model - you begin with your feelings and that determines everything that you do as a Jew.

If I am right in saying that the three models exist in tension, and that if tracing Jewish intellectual history, or Jewish religious history - which is a different thing - from the Bible to our day, you can see cycles in which one or other of the models is ascendant and the others are repressed, then the emergence of spirituality over the past two decades is a reaction to two centuries of intellectualism, certainly in western Europe, in Wissenschaft, in the curricula of Reform and Conservative Judaism. Conservative Judaism was created in the model of intellectualism. That is probably the main reason why we don’t have a lay constituency. David Halivni said many years ago, this movement will never be a mass movement - nobody out there understands what fifty professors at the Seminary and a few hundred rabbis are saying. Besides, it’s not at all clear if the rabbis are on the side of the Seminary here, they’re somewhere in between. In my book on Conservative Judaism someone talked about ‘three Conservative Judaisms’ - there’s the Conservative Judaism of fifty people at 3080 Broadway, then there’s an entirely different Conservative Judaism of 800-900 rabbis, and then there’s the rest of the world - three different movements, three different forms of expression.

It’s also a reaction to rampant behaviorism, certainly in Modern Orthodoxy. Every Erev Pesah I get this book in which I’m told that a *kezayit* is 5.3798...square cm of matzah, and a *kos* is the same arcane measurement of what constitutes fulfilling the mitzvah. More important, read Chaim Soloveitchik’s article in *Tradition* magazine about a year ago - an extraordinary castigation of the course of Modern Orthodoxy, based on this concern of ‘My mehitza is two inches higher than yours so I am a holier person...’ Once you begin on the behaviorist model there’s no end. You’re constantly looking over your right shoulder, you’re constantly worrying about somebody out-frumming you. When that model is in swing, the pull to the right is inevitable and deadly.

It seems to me that the New Spirituality is in reaction to the reigning models of intellectualism in the liberal movement and behaviorism in Modern Orthodoxy. Contributing to this is the transformation of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Seminary under Arthur Green, and also the new feminism. The fact that we now have a substantial number of women rabbis and hazzanim throughout America has contributed to a new awareness and a sensitivity to feelings, and to the fact that feelings must play a role in how we express ourselves as Jews.

What troubles me about the new spirituality? It is first of all antinomian at heart. I wonder how many members of BJ who dance their way through Lecha Dodi - every Friday night, 3000 of them - then proceed to keep Shabbat in any recognizable way? Or how many end up in singles bars along Broadway? There’s no structure, discipline.

Candle-lighting...? Though I appreciate the sociological thrust here, candle-lighting is not something that comes when you want it to come. There is a new definition of what constitutes the beginning of Shabbat. It’s ‘When my family comes together.’ But there is at least a piece of Shabbat that comes, whether you want it or not, at 5:17. Shabbat comes independently of your feelings or wishes.



Second, it's inherent anti-intellectualism. The predominance of feelings leads one to disregard rigorous thinking. It's not so clear what is God. 'It's not so important what you think about God but what does your heart tell you about God?' It tends to be narcissistic, individualistic, self-fulfillment. It denies three corner-stones of my reading of Judaism: structure; the mind and study; and community.

I think the three models should be held in balance. I can think of three or four people that I've known in my entire lifetime who had a chance of holding them in balance. Heschel was one, another was Simon Greenberg *alav hashalom*. He studied every day, was meticulous about mitzvot and had great passion. I am an intellectualist - yes, I do, and I feel, but that's not where my energy goes. I go to Refaeinu because my students - and Refaeinu - think it's important that I go. Debbie Friedman and I have a wonderful relationship and do a lot of things together but I tell her, 'This is crazy, this does not belong in a tefilah.'

I think it's important to encourage all three models. Synagogues have to make it possible for people to do what they feel temperamentally comes most naturally to them. It is entirely legitimate for a synagogue to have multiple tefilah groups, some of which may be study-tehilah groups, some may be spiritual-emotional havurah tefilah groups, some may be behaviorist - 'We daven!'

Our major problem is religious education. We don't even begin to understand what we should be doing in our schools.

*Two final comments specific to this occasion:*

When Heschel talked at a CA convention about the tension between keva and kavanah, I think that meant the tension between the behaviorist and the spiritualist models. Keva is behaviorism, kavanah is passion. Heschel was very sensitive to this tension. If you read that paper now, you will find the bottom line is that Heschel began as a hasid and ends as a hasid. His final line to us is. Without kavanah, don't even bother trying.

The very task of the hazzan is certainly to keep the behaviorist and the spiritual intention. What is nusah? Nusah is structure, but within the structure you do improv. Cornell West, a very prominent Christian theologian, talked about jazz improvisation as a model for theology, namely you begin with root, base ideas. You begin with a theme, then you go off. That's exactly what hazzanim do. I can hear ten hazzanim doing the same piece with the same nusah and everyone sounds different. The difference is the spirituality, the personal, the individualistic - but you do it within the framework of the classic nusah. You begin and end with the nusah, the sound is very familiar but the rendering is totally personal.

So Sam, wherever you are, I don't know if I 'dissed' spirituality - I don't think you can diss it, there's too much authentic Judaism there. But at the same time we have to understand it. Above all, you and I should not be prisoners of a passing fad. We should understand enough about it to know where it belongs in terms of the broader structure, how much to give it, and to make sure that it never gets to the point where it is a caricature. Because then you will have destroyed something that is authentically Jewish. Make sure that it is held in balance.

*Question from the floor: Do you think we're into spirituality more now because the Millennium is coming?*

Absolutely. But just tell your people it's not our Millennium.

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*Question: What do you think of the healing movement?*

I will one day write the theological assumptions of the healing movement. It depends what the healing service wants to do. Is it an attempt to open ourselves or to force God's hand? Is the focus on us or God? What Debbie Friedman and I argue about all the time is, I cannot take a healing service that is a pastiche of hasidic stories, a midrash here, a song there... If you're going to do a service, have a beginning, middle and end within a liturgical framework. She and I did one at UAHC Kallah at Santa Cruz last year, where we simply used birkhot ha-shahar, and transformed the liturgy into healing. That I can do.

*(Comment from the floor regarding the need to bring in people of all temperaments): I don't believe the Seminary has been very successful in encouraging all three models. This is in part the tension between East and West Coasts. As hazzanim, many of us are suspicious of the spiritual model, but the most powerful thing that I've experienced at any CA convention was when Debbie Friedman was with us two years ago...*

Debbie is extraordinarily sensitive to this agenda. She is a product of the Reform movement. She has suddenly discovered that *Gates of Prayer* is not from Sinai. When I showed her passages from Elohai Neshamah she said, 'Where has this been all my life?' It is precisely the task of the rabbi, the hazzan and the educators not to be swallowed up in the tide but to be above it, and to help these models speak to each other.

*(Comment from the floor): One of the problems in our services is that people are afraid to examine the texts and have an emotional connection with them. As hazzanim, that reflects itself in the fact that we are very emotional and people are afraid of that emotion. One of the major challenges that we face in the United States as a whole is that people are afraid to connect with their emotions...*

First of all, there are non-spiritualist hazzanim. I've heard them. They will give you a Hashkiveinu by the book. Their feelings don't come out in the music. The issue is temperament, conditioning. It's no accident that I came to Judaism through the mind. I learned early on that when I used my head I got rewarded - first in the class, scholarships, applause from my Mommy and Daddy. I learned that, in my family, feelings are not something to be outspoken about. But by nature we go into one or the other column, but the boundaries are mushy. For the past fifteen years I've been trying to break out of the most comfortable position...The last chapter in my book on tehiat hameitim is the most personal thing I've ever written. I tried to play off the academic history of ideas and personal testimony. My whole involvement with Debbie and women rabbinical students has been to re-educate myself, to pull out of the comfortable niche and tackle forms of expression which don't come intuitively to me. It's uncomfortable, but it's like stretching exercises. When you get into the pain zone, you know it's working.

*(Comment from the floor): We are trying to envision the Synagogue in the twenty-first century...*

I haven't the faintest idea.



## **Installation of newly elected officers and members of the Executive Council**

**Installing Officer: Hazzan Stephen J. Stein, Akron, OH**

I am pleased to welcome both colleagues and guests as we join together for the installation of the Cantors Assembly's newly elected officers and members of the Executive Council.

I would like to begin by recognizing those members of the Executive Council whose terms have come to an end:

Mark Biddelman, Carol Chesler, Carey Cohen, Ronald Eichaker, David Feuer, Paul Kowarsky, Robert Scherr, Murray Simon and David Tilman.

On behalf of your colleagues, I thank you for your time, effort and guidance over the past few years. I trust that your activity within the Assembly will remain constant and that we will be able to call upon you to assume new responsibilities as the need arises.

Henry Rosenblum, Joseph Gole, Chaim Najman and Sheldon Levin: Momentarily, you will be installed into offices other than the ones you have held during the past year. You have been reselected as a result of your hard work and because of the confidence that all of us have in your abilities. We thank you for your efforts and look forward to your continued leadership.

David Propis has held multiple offices in our organization in recent years. He has voluntarily chosen to step down from the officer core. With the demands placed on his time by a large and comparatively new pulpit, coupled with his schedule as a concert artist, David has informed the Nominations Committee that at least for now, he cannot give as much of himself as he knows the Assembly needs from its officers.

David, your efforts on behalf of the Assembly, over the past several years, will not soon be forgotten. Of particular note, are the countless hours spent bringing our office into the 1990's - the decade of the computer. Not only did you select the hardware and install and customize the software to meet our needs, but you also trained and provided technical support to staff and colleagues. Aside from all that, you are a wonderful person. Your input will be missed from officer's meetings as well as your sense of humor. You have made a commitment to continue to assist the Assembly when called upon and I am confident you will fulfill that pledge. Abe Lubin, would you please rise. Your presidency will be duly recognized tomorrow evening. Allow me, however, to share a few personal remarks. I am sure, at this moment, you fully appreciate just how quickly two years can go by. Relinquishing the gavel and moving from the head of the table to the side is not an easy transition.

I remember Nate Lam saying to me shortly after I succeeded him, "It is as though the phone just stopped ringing." Frankly, I have trouble believing that Nate's phone ever stops ringing. There is great comfort, however, in the knowledge that our organization is one in which past presidents are respected for their experience and relied upon for their advice. Thus it is that our past presidents remain active participants in the operation of the Assembly.

Abe, you are respected among your colleagues, particularly for your exceptional talent as a Shliach Tsibbur and for your scholarship. We join together in thanking you for having served at the helm of our precious organization during the past two years.

I shall now recognize those colleagues to be installed as new members of the Executive

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Council:

Laurie Rimland Bonn, Aryeh Finkelstein, Erica Lippitz, David Propis, Max Shimansky, Jeffrey Shiovits, Bruce Wetzler, Philip Wittlin and Sol Zim.

The Executive Council is the legislative branch of the Cantors Assembly. You will be called upon for your thoughts and recommendations on important decisions - decisions which will affect not only each member of the organization, but also those young men and women who have yet to join our ranks. You have been chosen because of the esteem with which you are regarded by your colleagues, for your past efforts on behalf of the Assembly and our confidence in your ability to make the right choices. I congratulate on your election.

One by one, I shall now call upon the new slate of officers to be installed for the coming year.

Jacob Mendelson - You are respected by colleagues and lay persons alike, as one of the very finest interpreters of our sacred liturgy. That accomplishment is the result of not only a glorious voice, but also of a mastery of the intricacies of Hazzanut. Yet, at the same time you have a keen understanding of the needs and yearnings of the contemporary worshiper. Your ability to successfully balance these divergent facets of the synagogue service has made you a role model to other cantors. As an accomplished Hazzan and teacher, we believe your input is essential as we work with H.L. Miller Cantorial School in the recruitment and training of Hazzanim for a new millennium. I would be remiss, were I not to mention that you are the brother of a past president of the Cantors Assembly, Hazzan Solomon Mendelson. I know how very proud he is to have you follow in his footsteps as an officer of the Cantors Assembly. I hereby install you as Secretary of the Cantors Assembly for the coming year.

Joseph Gole, would you please rise. Joe, you are beginning your fourth year as an officer of the CA. Those who have had the distinction and pleasure of working with you have been impressed by your intellect, particularly your background in business, your ability to look at an issue from all angles and your willingness to compromise. You are soft spoken. I cannot recall ever having heard you raise your voice. During a heated discussion, you are the first one to say, "We have to try and find a solution which will be satisfactory to everyone." All of those qualities make you an integral member of this core of officers. Along with Nate Lam, you have accepted the co-chairmanship of the Assembly's 50th convention, to be held next June in New York. I know it will be magnificent. It is my pleasure to install you as Treasurer of the Assembly.

I will now install our three vice presidents in alphabetical order. Sheldon, would you please rise. Few colleagues have worked harder for the Assembly in recent years and have produced more tangible results than you. Before becoming an officer, you served as chairman of our Education and Publications Committees. You were also the co-chairman of a most successful convention. More recently, under your guidance, Hazzanet has blossomed into a format which allows colleagues throughout the world to express ideas and share concerns on a daily basis. The Cantors Assembly now has a web page which was created and is maintained by you. Had you been privy to only half of the accolades I have heard spoken about you, you would be truly touched and proud. What a wonderful addition to the officer core you have been. I hereby install you as vice president of the Cantors Assembly.

Chaim Najman - our friendship goes back many years as we have both been active in the



Assembly's Tri-State Region. You have brought great distinction to our district by expertly chairing and co-chairing regional conferences which have attracted colleagues not only from Michigan and Ohio, but Hazzanim serving pulpits in Toronto and Chicago as well. In our area, you are among the Hazzanim most admired, not only for your vocal abilities, but also for the concern that you continually extend to and express for colleagues.

You were a motivating force behind the writing of *Machzor 101*, the last project undertaken and written by our beloved Sam Rosenbaum, *Zichrono Livracha*. We both know how this project energized him. With Sam's sudden passing, it is you who have accepted the responsibility of seeing the project through to completion. We anticipate this work, ultimately, will serve as an aid and an inspiration to countless worshipers during the Yamim Noraim. Chaim, I hereby install you as vice president of the Cantors Assembly.

Bob Scherr, would you please rise. Last year, you were a co-chairman of our Israel Convention. As you know better than most of us, it was a most difficult assignment. The tragic events in Israel last spring, the difficulty of trying to plan an event in a country thousands of miles away, and the uniqueness of Israeli society posed challenges virtually every step of the way. Yet, you remained focused and calm. In doing so, you earned the admiration and gratitude of many. In years past you have been an instructor in the Cantors Assembly's Ba'al Tefillah Institute and have been a member of the Executive Council. You have proven yourself both as a leader and a fine gentleman. I truly believe that the Cantors Assembly will be greatly enhanced in the years to come from your continued involvement. I am most pleased to hereby install you as vice president of the Cantors Assembly.

Henry, would you please rise. When I became president, I was accorded the opportunity to select one new officer. I would like to believe that I made many sound decisions during my presidency, but, I cannot think of one which was wiser than having selected you to be that officer. As your family, colleagues and congregants will attest, you are an excellent Hazzan, a fine teacher, an articulate speaker, a well organized individual, a man devoted to his family and last, but certainly not least, a mensch. In short, you are held in the highest of esteem by those who know you. You also happen to tell pretty good jokes. I could enumerate your many qualifications for holding the office of president of the Cantors Assembly, but they are known to most and our time is limited. The fact that you have co-chaired two of our last four conventions, perhaps says enough in and of itself.

This installation is like no other in the history of the Cantors Assembly. Not only will you be the president of the Cantors Assembly, but you will soon assume an equally prestigious position, that of Dean of the H.L. Miller Cantorial School. The impact you will have on the Cantorate clearly will extend for many years to come.

It is no secret that at times during the past half century, the relationship between the Cantors Assembly and the Cantorial School has been somewhat strained. Who better to bridge these differences than someone who is both insightful and sensitive? Who better to mend these fences than a graduate and former faculty member of the school who is equally devoted to this organization?

In truth, there is no reason for conflict between the Assembly and the Cantorial School because our goals are identical. We both want the most promising young men and women recruited for our profession and we want them to receive the best education possible. Nothing

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less than the very future of our “sacred calling” (a term coined by our beloved Sam) depends on it. I know of no one more deserving or better suited to assume this dual role than you.

Your presidency is also distinguished by a second challenge. You will be the first person since before 1960, to embark on a presidency without Sam Rosenbaum at your side. We all know that there will never be another Sam but you are blessed a core of talented and devoted friends who will be present to lend a helping hand every step of the way. In particular, you will benefit from Abe Shapiro’s years of experience and his keen business mind.

Henry, I am so very proud to call you my friend! I hereby install you as the 31st president of the Cantors Assembly. Before turning over the podium, on behalf of all your colleagues allow me to offer congratulations not only to you, but to your entire family and to the members of your congregation, many of whom are with us this evening. Mazal Tov!



## **Address by Hazzan Henry Rosenblum Installation as President of Cantors Assembly**

As I think of the events of this past year that have led up to this moment, I am acutely aware of Dickens' immortal words: "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times." What an amazing year of such incredible highs and lows.

It was just ten months ago that we celebrated Jerusalem 3000 in Israel. Hazzanim and laity sharing the magnificence of Israel and music. My family having the personal joy of traveling together as three generations, joined by dear friends from my shul breathing the spirit of Eretz Yisrael, feeling the closeness of those who walked those paths before us, making our own mark upon the land of our ancestors. It was a spiritual high point in the lives of the forty of us who joined with the Cantors Assembly for its 49th Annual Convention.

Then in December, Susan and I had the remarkable experience of sharing our daughter Leora's Bat Mitzvah here in this sanctuary, surrounded by the love and warmth of our family and more than 1000 friends. The feelings present in the shul on that Shabbat made it so very clear that we would never leave Beth El for another synagogue. The outpouring of love from those who were here as well as the calls and letters from those unable to be with us in person, reinforced in us the understanding that the reasons for which we chose to come here ten years ago were indeed correct ones. That the community we found here was so special and loving, that this was our home, our place of support and nurture. The place that became so understanding as I became busier with Assembly business: discussions to begin planning the retirement of our Executive Vice President Sam Rosenbaum, phone call after phone call from Sam himself, each and every day, as he placed his indelible mark on this convention, picking him up at the airport as he came to join me in meetings with the hotel management, the caterer and leaders in the community. What energy! Such excitement! It was the best of times.

Then with one phone call, my life was turned upside down. "Henry, this is Ismar Schorsch. I would like to talk with you about the Deanship of the H.L. Miller Cantorial School." I told the Chancellor that I didn't believe that I would be willing to leave Beth El, but that I would certainly accept his invitation to meet with him. Sam and I talked for hours about the exciting possibilities for the Cantorate with a Hazzan finally in place as the Dean of the School. He was thrilled for me, for what we hoped this could mean for the School, and the Assembly. The long-awaited cementing of the relationship of the two forces concerned with Hazzanut. Well, you know what happened next. Following two days of interviews and incredible soul-searching, I made the decision to accept the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Sam and I talked about it daily, Susan and I talked about it hourly, and the response from my dear friends here was overwhelming. But then, suddenly, with one more phone call, a call filled with unbelievable words, Sam was gone. The void. The emptiness. What a loss for all who knew him, and for those who, even without knowing him, had been influenced by him. As our President Abe Lubin so aptly said: "*Naflah ateret roshenu*" - "Our leader — the crown — has fallen from our head." Dickens was now only half right. "It was the worst of times."

But we moved forward. Not understanding just how much work Sam had always completed so effortlessly. Not realizing just how much work would need to be done to make this

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convention a reality. Not able to fathom how we would ever be able to fill the void that his death had created. So we found ourselves crying with each other, comforting each other, shaking our heads upon seeing his distinctive penmanship on letters to us that filled our files, calling each other to strengthen the bonds of contact, and persevering as he had taught us. I'm saddened that he is not here in person, hearing me speak at this very moment, but he told me many times how good he felt about my assuming the Presidency, and I am proud to be following the path he charted for those who have chosen to serve the Assembly. "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times." Or so I thought. But I was wrong.

Five days after standing at Sam's grave, I received the phone call that Susan's father, Marvin Ticker, had finally succumbed in his valiant 13-year fight against cancer. This was now the death of two heroes, two remarkably powerful men. Men who taught me, inspired me, believed in me, and with whom I shared a deep love and respect. I don't have Sam's unique ability to find the right words for every occasion and to phrase them magnificently, or Marvin's ability to know the right way to solve every problem in life and then do it, but I do believe that I know how to surround myself with friends and confidants, and together find the right words to say and the right things to do. I had withstood the battering and was still on my feet, although I wasn't sure I could handle much more.

I thought the year was pretty much over except for working with Morty Shames and Steve Stein on the Placement Commission, working with Steve Stoehr, Alberto Mizrahi, Abe Shapiro, and Robert Kieval on this Convention, serving this wonderful congregation of 1100 families, and finding time for my family whenever possible. I assured my leadership here at the congregation that the Seminary will wait a year for me, that for the next thirteen months I will serve this congregation to the best of my ability as I have for the past ten years - giving of myself as fully as possible, caring for others, bringing a love of Yiddishkeit, a love of prayer, a love of music, and a love of Hazzanut to all those whom I teach and touch. While at the same time, serving you my dear colleagues, with the level of care and openness you expect and deserve.

I look forward to working with a wonderful group of officers whose chief desire is to serve you. To find more ways for the Assembly to meet your needs throughout the year, not just at Convention. To create greater opportunities for ongoing continuing education through regional programming and classes. To implement a program bank that is a real aid to colleagues; making successful programmatic ideas, concert formats, program notes, unpublished concert material, names for musical and Hazzanic scholars-in-residence, among other possibilities, truly available for colleagues of all ages and experience. I intend to enhance the Dor L'Dor and Ambassador Programs so that more congregations will understand what a Hazzan can mean and bring to a shul and then hopefully will seek to engage more full-time Hazzanim. As Sam always said, "It is up to us to be our most effective public relations firm." We must be more visible in our own synagogues, religious schools and preschools. We must take active roles in our communities, our Schechter schools, and in Camp Ramah. I'm a product of Ramah, and it was the best thing that ever happened to me. The directors of Ramah are eager and willing for us to be a presence at Camp. To teach Tefilah and all Synagogue skills, to teach music and a love of Jewish music in particular, to tie tzitzit and properly adjust tefillin. The more that we do at Ramah, the greater the receptivity to what we want the camp to improve



upon as well. Recommendations about Nusah and the role of Hazzanim in Synagogue worship at camp will have much greater impact when we are insiders contributing to the community we have a stake in. Commit yourselves to spending a few weeks at your local Ramah camp. Talk to the camp director about arranging for a rotation of Hazzanim from your region to cover the Tefilah program for the summer. If the total number of Hazzanim today who came through the Ramah program is as small as it is, it must be due, in part, to our not having assumed as great a role as we should have. You can expect to hear more about this from me through your regional officers. I'm looking forward to turning the corner in our relation to what is the most successful program of the entire Conservative movement. We must give of ourselves to the youth of tomorrow, and in so doing, we will also benefit from that giving. It is clearly up to us.

It is also my belief that we can enhance the relationship between the Assembly and the American Conference of Cantors. There are areas of concern that should be addressed for our mutual betterment. There is more that binds us together than separates us. There is much work to be done there.

It is also my hope that we can have greater outreach to those who function as Cantors in synagogues while not yet members of the Assembly. I believe that we can teach these people, help them to improve their skills, prepare them for our requirements for membership, and encourage them to cast their lot with us as true colleagues. We are all strengthened when they are within the organization, not functioning on their own outside us. This too is a high priority on my agenda.

And in a year, as Dean of the H.L. Miller Cantorial School, I look forward to increasing the respect and collegiality between Rabbinical and Cantorial students that will carry over into pulpit life. It is my intent to work toward the implementation of a core curriculum for Rabbinical and Cantorial students. If students in both schools *study together* in classes such as Hebrew, Mishna, Liturgy, History of American Zionism, History of Synagogue Music, and basic weekday Nusah, there is a greater likelihood that there will be a real respect for the other as a colleague and a partner for serving the Jewish people when the school experience is over. How exciting if we could put the nonproductive antagonism behind us, and create a partnership that would make pulpit life more enjoyable, fulfilling and beneficial for all.

And, ultimately, it is my dream to create a true partnership between the Cantorial School and the Cantors Assembly. As good as the School is now, I believe it will be better for all of us who have responded to the calling of this profession, if there can be input from those who have devoted a lifetime to serving our people through the songs and prayers of our tradition, whose expertise and active work in recruitment will continue to bring us more young people eager to serve K'lal Yisrael through Hazzanut. How wonderful if we can look back someday and say: "It is the best of times."

This address would not be complete without a few words to some special people: To my partners here at Beth El who have helped make this a wonderful working environment. The nine of you who have given me the freedom to do my work in my own, unique way, even if it meant allowing my sense of humor to be limited only by my seeming to fall asleep in staff meetings. Thank you for always being there. And let's make sure that next year's company picnic is the best ever!

To my colleagues in the Assembly who have shown enough faith in me to bestow this

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most important honor upon me. I will do my utmost to continue to earn your confidence and respect. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you, but I'm finished chairing Conventions forever.

To my close friends both within and outside the Assembly. Thank you for always being there for me, and for never missing an opportunity to show me how you feel about me. I know that the friendships will endure no matter where we will be living, and regardless of who will be paying for the phone calls.

To my mother, Carolyn Lubin, my other mother, Frances Ticker, to Susan, Leora, Shira, and Ari. Thank you for your unconditional love and support. I look forward to seeing you again in two years (just kidding), and to continuing on life's exciting journey together for years and years to come. You make my life complete. I love you all so much!

I want to thank each and every one of you for your patience, and assure you that this is the last time that you will ever hear me say this much again at one time. I look forward to enjoying the rest of the evening with you and sharing the next two years with all of you in good health. L'shannah Haba'ah in New York City, when we meet again to conclude this Jubilee Year of the Cantors Assembly.



## **How Shall We Sing the Songs of the Lord?**

**Hazzanim Nathan Lam, Los Angeles, CA; Linda Kates, Los Angeles, CA;  
Chaim Najman, Southfield, MI; Ari Priven, B'nai Jeshurun, New York, NY;  
Sol Zim, Hollis Hills, NY  
Chair: Hazzan Sheldon Levin, Philadelphia, PA**

*Hazzan Sheldon Levin:*

Welcome to what may be the most important session of this convention. In the current survey of our members, an important aspect of our work that members want is Continuing Education and Growth. We will have the opportunity to learn from each other and share melodies and programs which touch key parts of our work as shlihei tsibbur. We know that nothing remains static. Over the past few decades styles of prayer worship, abilities, knowledge and needs of many of our congregants have changed. We often hear that people want to 'participate', and many of us are not sure what that means to our role of hazzanim, or whether this is another fad, like the rock services of the late sixties. I'm told that many sefardic congregations around the world feature the entire kahal chanting complete texts of liturgy; while those of us steeped in ashkenazi tradition yearn for the give-and-take that a good cantor and congregation can provide for each other. We hear about havurot, school or camp services, where the role of hazzan has been deleted. We need to seek ways of ensuring that our position will remain vital and necessary. Unfortunately we can't often visit other congregations on Shabbat, so hopefully today we will get a taste of successful programs that are taking place around the country. This special panel represents four different kinds of synagogues from coast to coast, one Reform, three Conservative. They represent different sizes of congregations; some have many children, one features mostly single young adults. Some use instruments on Shabbat, some do not. Each presenter will show how they address this question of participation. We may not agree with everything, and the Cantors Assembly does not endorse these as the best or only ways of leading services. Each of us will need to find what works best for them. But today we can hear a variety of ideas which may inspire for us programming worth exploring.

First of all, from Stephen S. Wise Temple in Los Angeles, one a recently-admitted member of our Assembly, the other a Past President: Hazzanim Linda Kates and Nathan Lam.

*Hazzan Nathan Lam:*

Before we sing our first selection, I want you to notice that I use the word meshorerim - I chose the word five years ago, when I saw the writing on the wall - there were a lot of things happening in synagogue life that I didn't like. We were being dictated to as to the way the service was going to go in general. I also saw that we as cantors have been somewhat reactive rather than proactive in the way we approach services- someone would say, 'I saw this done there.' and we would imitate it. But you can't imitate something unless it's your own. So I thought, what would be appropriate for me in my synagogue that would allow me to express myself and make a difference in the world as a cantor? I went back to the concept of meshorerim, a word meaning 'songsters'. They went along with itinerant cantors in Europe - usually there was a tenor, a bass and a couple of children, and they were extensions of the hazzan.

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zan. I grew up with Cantor Alan Michaelson z'l and we had an opportunity every week to daven shaharit. In 1956 there were four or five of us, and by the time we graduated High School in 1965 there were thirty-two people on a rotation who could daven shaharit. So my idea was on Friday night to make Jews of people, of kids and their parents. I didn't care if there was one kid who sang with me on Friday night, or a hundred. And that's the key. Anybody can do this. You need only one person or two. It's great for the kid to be an extension of you, to do solo work, the congregation sees continuity and it makes them feel good...

We get about 500-700 people...We have 13-14 year-olds who do the Isaacson Kiddush, the Ganchoff Magen Avot, they know the names Lewandowski, Sulzer. We do Michael Issacson's *Shir Ari*, the 2-part Asher Bidvaro by Jerry Kopmar, the *Shir Chadash* service by Ami Aloni, published by Transcontinental...

I came to Stephen S. Wise, which is a Reform Temple, from a right-wing Conservative congregation in Long Island where the rabbi was a graduate of Yeshiva University and we used the Birnbaum siddur. Linda Kates will tell you about our Shabbat program at Stephen S. Wise.

*Hazzan Linda Kates:*

What we have at Stephen Wise Temple on Shabbat morning is very special. B'nei Mitzvah are separate from the service, each child has a specific time in another room, 10 o'clock, 11:30, 2 o'clock...We get about 125 people every week, starting with Torah study at 9 o'clock. From 10 till noon is the service. Everybody stays for community pot-luck lunch, from 1 -2 is zemirot. By 2 o'clock nobody wants to leave, they start filtering out about 3 o'clock. It has become a model for similar services which are springing up not only over Los Angeles but a lot of people elsewhere in the country have taken our siddur which we have put together...

*Hazzan Levin:*

We now have Hazzan Chaim Najman of Shaarey Zedek Congregation, Southfield, Michigan. This congregation has two locations, many families with children, and its hazzan has developed exciting programs to meet their needs...

*Hazzan Chaim Najman:*

I am a traditional hazzan serving a Conservative synagogue that has been very slow to change. The service is quite often described by others as a 'High Church service'. We have the tradition of great hazzanim who preceded me, Jack Barkin among others. I inherited and have maintained for eighteen years a sixteen to twenty voice professional choir that sings on the High Holydays, Festivals and generally once a month on Rosh Chodesh, and special shabbatot. The changes that I have introduced are an attempt to address the problems that existed before I came and after I came. You will recognize them: the physical limitations of our Sanctuary, which holds 1200 people when the adjacent halls are not opened up, and when they are it seats 4000 people. Talk about intimacy and spirituality... it's a neat trick. There's a growing trend, even though people do like occasionally to hear a hazzan do a beautiful musaf, to hoiche kedushas - and this does not necessarily come from the rabbi. There's a trap of old, stale melodies, a highly revered tradition of Shaarey Zedek melodies that go back as much as 125 years, German songs for Hallel that you would never dream of. Any attempt to alter them comes with very stiff resistance. The well-known cry that we hear - davening no longer has



meaning for the congregants, particularly those who attend very infrequently.

I have also come to realize that one never gets 100% acceptance, and there is no single answer. There are as many people who come back displeased and disenchanted with some of the lively services that they see in Florida, as there are people who would like to imitate it every week. My challenge is to address these needs and at the same time maintain with some faithfulness what we recognize as *matbeah shel tefilah*, and the rich heritage to which I am committed, the choral and cantorial heritage. I want participation, a lively feeling, I'd love to have a happening every shabbat like Nate illustrated, with people in touch with spirituality. The keyword for me has become 'variety'. The first change was to have a Youth Choir. I can claim, which I argued with the Youth Director, the rabbi and the School Board, who questioned how justifiable it was to have a choir that meets in school hours - 95% of the kids who graduated from Hebrew High School started out with at least five years of Youth Choir and got to know the service. The repertoire is standard, I am not at a stage, unlike with my professional choir, of commissioning new music. The oldies are new melodies. There is a book *Siddur and Song*, with melodies that I would never have dreamed of using fifteen years ago, they are brand new, no one has heard them.

When I was walking round with the Sefer Torah I paid attention to listen who is singing in tune, so I picked up lots of people who were too shy or turned off by the word 'choir' and I wrote to them about the problems we are addressing and invited them to discuss what they thought should happen. We formed a group called 'Shirei Shabbat' - it's not a choir, they make a huge, vast, cavernous Sanctuary seem so small. They're contagious, they lend enthusiasm. They do something similar to what the children do. I use similar repertoire, not the same exactly, and they come up with me once a month. It's a wonderful way to introduce 'new' melodies. If I introduce a new melody I get stoned, but if the children or the Shirei Shabbat do it, people clamor for it.

*Hazzan Levin:*

You may have heard of B'nai Jeshurun in the Upper West Side of Manhattan, for its ability to attract and involve large numbers of young adult Jews. They have begun programs that are now being tried in numerous college campuses and other congregations around the country. We have now the cantor of that congregation, Ari Priven, who was born in Buenos Aires and grew up in the first Conservative synagogue in Argentina, founded by the late Rabbi Marshall Meyer z'l. As a youth, Ari was part of the group that shared the role of cantor, and in his twenties he was acting as the full cantor. When Marshall came to B'nai Jeshurun, he invited Ari in 1989 to become the cantor, where he leads one of the largest and most vital communities in the country.

*Hazzan Ari Priven:*

One of the main things that is different from other synagogues is the participation of the rabbi. Both rabbis sing and that creates an energy that gives continuity throughout the service. I play and sing at the side of the bima. It doesn't matter if it's shaharit, or Torah service, or musaf, everything runs smoothly during the three or four hours of the service. There's silence throughout the service. We are getting more and more kids, but in general there is an automatic decorum.

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Most of the melodies are traditional melodies. Most of the core of the service is traditional nusah. When the rabbis sing we are sharing - most of the people don't realize who is the hazzan - people find that an invitation to sing. When there are young adults singing next to you, it's an invitation for everybody to sing.

On Friday night we have 1000 people - actually we have 2000 people but we cannot fit them all in so we have two services. We start with a slow melody, could be a niggun or Lecha Dodi...

*Hazzan Levin:*

Finally, a cantor, composer, performer - a person who needs no introduction to anyone here. He has written settings that are sung throughout the world, the cantor of Hollis Hills Jewish Center in Flushing, NY - Hazzan Sol Zim.

*Hazzan Sol Zim:*

I've given out some song sheets from my new two volumes, but if you didn't get them you'll still be able to sing along - it's called instant participation!

Hasidic music is something that I grew up with. There are many changes taking place. When I first started writing, I believed the only way to get the congregation involved is to give them little melodies...Today you need a synthesis of three things, I call them the three S's: spirituality, sing-along and symphony - I have a thirty-piece choir. The congregation can hear everything - hazzanut, participation- don't let them be spectators. You also need an attachment to what was. Let's not forget our roots - the nusah! The nusah hatefilah should be there...

In my songs I've given the hazzan a section by himself, and always there is the participation of the congregation. They can be done by two - or four-part choir - I have accompaniments for all forty selections and at least twenty-two can be done as concert pieces...The accompaniments are mixed, they are more pop than I usually would use, but that pop feeling is put there to make the listener feel right at home ... A lot of this can be done a cappella..All my old material is definitely hasidic, jumpy - dai dai dai...There is a new age of spirituality coming. The world is demanding it. You can say, "I'm not going to give it to you," but you're going to be left behind...

(*Question from the floor*): Can you perform these pieces properly if you don't have a good accompanist?

*Hazzan Sol Zim:* You can hold their attention by singing softer and slow..

*Hazzan Lam:* We create an atmosphere at Friday night service by not using the organ, but the piano. Sometimes I tell the pianist to stop playing so that we can hear the sound of a cappella singing, a wonderful sound. Every Friday I do a piece of legitimate hazzanut, and you don't want accompaniment.

*Question from the floor to Sol Zim:* You said that you write in nusah but your Yismechu bemalechutecha was in minor, not freygish..

*Zim:* I grew up in a little shtibl where they sang *Yismechu hashomayim vesogel hoorets* in minor...When it comes to nusah, I made it my business not to deviate from the major nuschaot. In the Barechu I used the same melody as Mi Chamocha. If you look at the variations that can be done on nuschaot you'll see that I did stick with nusah.

*Hazzan David Propis:* What is the continuity like in your services?

*Hazzan Priven:* On a Friday night there's almost no speaking. We say the last few lines of each



paragraph so there's silence in between. I'm playing on the keyboard. On shabbat morning I might play a chord and whoever is leading will come in.

*Hazzan Kates:* The uniqueness of our service is the balance that we have, we use the guitar in about five pieces throughout the service, then it goes into traditional nusah, or congregational singing, then we go into Debbie Friedman or something. So we have a balance between old and new, guitar and a cappella.

*Hazzan Lam:* We have about five congregational readings throughout the service. Once I said to Moshe Gancoff, 'I did the Rapaport Retsei,' he said, 'What about the rest of the service?' You've got to have a fabric - you start at Lechu Neranena and you end at Adon Olam and you have to go somewhere in between.

*Hazzan Zim:* The rabbi announces the first page and I continue. The next time the page is announced is the Amidah. No English readings. On Shabbat morning the page is announced at Ein Kamocho. During the Torah reading - I wouldn't know!... (That's because I know all the pages!!) During musaf, which is our highlight, if it's very late we do a hoiche kedushah, but you can do even that in five minutes or thirty minutes. A hoiche kedushah shouldn't scare any of you cantors - it's up to you to make it work. I once had a rabbi who said, 'If it's quarter to twelve on the button - hoiche kedushah!' It was like playing with me. I went on after his sermon and he always made sure he ended fourteen minutes to twelve! So I sped through the davening. But in the middle of the kedushah (!) he came over to me and whispered, 'We have time.' But I carried on and did the whole musaf in six minutes. The next week he did it, but I did just the opposite. (This rabbi is no longer with us.)

*Hazzan Najman:* One fringe benefit of having what we presented, the Shirei Shabbat and the Youth Choir, is there is no way the rabbi or president would even dare to suggest a hoiche kedushah when you have fifty children who have been trained to do the hazerat hashats. We have a rabbi who asks beforehand what the choir will do and prepares the congregation. There is nothing as effective in getting the congregation tuned into what you're doing, even if they never come to services, than a rabbi getting up and talking about the theme of the one paragraph that your choral group is going to do.

*Hazzan Mizrahi:* First, I'd like to caution everyone here that Sol's reaction to the rabbi and the hoiche kedushah may not be appropriate to each of us. And a question to Hazzan Priven: If you can get up and do a cantorial composition by Gancoff or Alter and be accepted by the same people who are there to sway and clap, I'll convert.

*Hazzan Priven:* During the yomim noraim someone else plays the organ and I take the role of the traditional hazzan. My education is not traditional hazzanut, but still I use it...You can go back and forth from traditional nusah and an invitation to people to sing. One element that I have in the electronic keyboard is the ability to suddenly become a guitar, or piano or organ. It can give pomposity, or a small guitar for a niggun, or a full band for people to dance.

## **A Foretaste of Prayer Books to Come**

**Dr. Marcia Falk**

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I'm honored and delighted to be with you at this Jubilee Conference to read from and discuss *The Book of Blessings: New Jewish Prayers for Daily Life, the Sabbath, and the New Moon Festival*, the new Hebrew-English prayer book that I began writing some thirteen-plus years ago and which was published last fall by Harper Collins. It was a special treat to attend your concert last night and to hear the singing that's wafted from the various rooms of this hotel during the day. Although I lack the beautiful singing voice that the members of this audience are blessed to have, I believe I do share something important in common with you: historically, after all, it was the *hazzanim* who contributed the innovations to synagogue liturgy. Especially before the era of the printing press, the *hazzan* had the dual role of transmitter and creator of the tradition, introducing melody as well as words—in the form of new *piyyutim*—into the liturgy. And I think we're seeing a wonderful revival of that creative aspect of the *hazzan*'s role in our time. I also think there is something else we share: *sensibility*. For as much as I enjoy scholarly immersion in text, it is something beyond the scholarship, even beyond the intellectual excitement, that impels me in my work—and I'm guessing that this is something that also impels you in yours. I'm talking about the need for beauty, the desire to create art.

To be sure, my book is the product of years of study—which began, by the way, in childhood in a traditionally oriented Conservative home and continued for years at JTS, many years before I ever thought to compose new liturgy—and I hope the book will be used as a text by scholars of liturgy as well as those who are interested in contemporary issues for the Jewish community. In the sections of the book that augment and comment upon the liturgy—the preface, the introductions to the three cycles of prayer, and the hundred page Commentary at the back—I explore the questions and themes that I believe are crucial to how we approach prayer today, beginning with theology—what it means to have *honest* talk about the sacred—and including issues of hierarchy, gender, community, inclusivity, and social justice, which are important aspects of any theologizing but which, at the same time, go beyond the theological domain. But I did not *set out* to be a theologian or a theorist, and *The Book of Blessings* is primarily a *siddur*, intended for use by the community as a whole, including—especially—you, the *hazzanim*. It is exciting for me to have the opportunity to share the work with you, and I hope you will consider using it, setting it to music—old and new—and to traditional *nusah*. Because music is not only what brings texts alive, it is what makes new words feel comfortable and familiar. I will be speaking to you today as a fellow artist—as librettist, let us say, to composer or performer—letting the themes emerge from the narrative as I talk about the creative process. At the end of this talk, Linda Hirschhorn will present a melody she has composed to my **Birkat Hamazon**; I would be thrilled if others of you also wished to set my blessings to music. First, though, I want to tell the story of how this book began, how it developed



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and changed over time, and why it looks the way it does today, because I am, above all, a poet, which is to say, a lover of literature, of language—especially Hebrew literature and the Hebrew language.

I'll begin with a story within my story—what we call in good Yiddish storytelling tradition a *moshl*. This one is about my great-great-great grandmother—and yours—Hannah. As you recall, Hannah was an ordinary woman who wanted a child; when she failed to conceive, she prayed. What happened after that turned this ordinary woman into an extraordinary character. This is how the Bible tells her story in כ וְדַבֵּר וְלֹא קָרְבָּנָה (I Sam. 1:9-10; 12-16)

*Hannah rose after eating and drinking at Shiloh while Eli the priest was sitting at the entrance to God's sanctuary. Her spirit was greatly pained and she prayed to God, weeping profusely.... As she continued praying to God, Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah, she spoke in her heart; her lips moved, but she uttered no sound; and Eli took her for a drunkard. Eli said to her, "How long will you go on behaving like a drunkard! Put away your wine!" "Then Hannah replied, saying, "No, my lord, I am a woman in anguish, and I have had neither wine nor liquor, but have been pouring my heart out before God. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking all this time out of the greatness of my concern and out of my vexation."*

At first, this little narrative may not seem terribly remarkable: a woman mutters under her breath, a priest accuses her of drinking, the woman explains herself to him. But the remarkable-ness of this story depends on Hannah's very ordinariness: for Hannah was the first ordinary person to stand and pray at the entrance to the sanctuary—the holy sanctuary, where high priests officiated as men offered up their sacrifices. At the entrance to that auspicious site, Hannah stood—with no sacrificial offering, no priest to act as her intermediary—and simply prayed, in her own voice, using only her own words.

Centuries later, when the rabbis were replacing the sacrificial offerings of Temple days with a different kind of worship—that of verbal communal prayer, which they called ha'avodah shebalev, “the service of the heart” (and which, of course, would open the portal to the role of shali‘ah tzibur, or hazzan)—whom did they choose as their exemplar of authenticity? Hannah.

This is from the Talmud Bavli תְּתִקְעֶפֶת

*Rabbi Hamnuna said: How many great laws can be learned from these verses relating to Hannah! Now Hannah, she spoke in her heart. From this [we learn] that one who prays must direct his [sic] heart. (Berakhot 31a)*

It's sadly ironic that although the rabbis chose Hannah as their model, they directed their teaching almost exclusively to men. Apparently failing to see the Hannahs in their own midst, they neglected to include women in communal prayer. But that's another story, which we don't have time to go into today. The abandonment of sacrificial offerings in favor of words, many of which were written by the rabbis themselves, was hardly an obeisant submission to authorities of the past; the establishment of synagogue prayer as the normative mode of worship entailed tremendous creative innovation. With the second Temple destroyed, the worship prac-

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tices of Israel were in flux, and the rabbis sought to lead the way through this transition. In order to do so, they needed to challenge the historical authority of the priesthood and assert their own authority in its stead. Who became the rabbis' model in this process, their exemplar of courage as they sought to challenge traditional authority? Once again, Hannah. Here's the Bavli again **C** בְּתַלְקָה וְתִרְכָּה

*Hannah replied, saying, "No, my lord." Ula (some say Rabbi Yose bar Hanina), said [interpreting this]: She said to him, "You are no lord [person of authority] in this matter, and the Spirit-of-Holiness does not dwell in you, for you have been suspicious of me in this matter." Others say that she said to him, "You are no lord [person of authority], nor is the Shekhinah or the Spirit-of-Holiness with you, for you have presumed me guilty rather than innocent. Are you not aware that I am a woman in anguish [a woman of bitter spirit]?" (Berakhot 31b)*

As you can see, the rabbis attribute to Hannah more chutzpah than the biblical storyteller did. It's clear that they admired her not just for the way she spoke to God but for the clear-headedness, the sheer—let's face it—audacity, with which she spoke back to authority, defending herself against the accusations of the high priest. To judge by how they embellish Hannah's story, it would seem that the rabbis saw in her actions a precedent and a justification for their own challenge to traditional authority.

And so, as we examine the relevance of liturgical creativity in our own time, considering the relationship between, on the one hand, *creativity*—which arises out of our need for beauty and, above all, truth—and on the other hand, *continuity with tradition*—which helps to fulfill our needs for participation in a community and connection to a history—I ask you to keep these questions in the back of your mind: As the rabbis brought Hannah as their precedent, is there any reason we shouldn't bring *them as ours*? If the rabbis were emboldened by Hannah, shouldn't we be too? Put it another way: Are we breaking or keeping with tradition when we follow in the rabbis' footsteps and make our own innovations?

Now to the story of *The Book of Blessings*. As a poet, I have long been drawn to the lyric intensity and power of the Hebrew b'rakhah. I first began to write *b'rakhot*, blessings, of my own, however, for a specific reason: I was uncomfortable with the heavily patriarchal image of God in traditional prayer. During the course of the time I was working on this project, my understanding of the greater context, the greater whole—my theology, if you will—evolved, revealing itself to me in unexpected ways, each of which became part of the creative process, influencing my liturgical forms. Because I never completely abandoned any station along the way—I did not reject my earlier compositions, I just moved on to write more—what I find as I look over this first volume of *The Book of Blessings* is a variegated collection. To noone's surprise more than my own, *The Book of Blessings* has emerged as a *siddur*—a whole prayer book—for use by individuals, families, and communities, in the home, the synagogue, and the *havurah*, on weekdays, Sabbaths, and Rosh Hodesh, the festival of the New Moon. (More volumes are in progress: for the major and minor festivals, the Passover Haggadah, the High Holidays, and the personal life cycle.) But it all began with a few simple blessings.

Looking back to that beginning, I see that my first blessings were closely based on the traditional blessing form: they exhorted the community to bless, praise, celebrate, or seek out the presence of the divine in relation to specific occasions, such as beginning a meal or usher-



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ing in a holiday. But they departed from the traditional blessings by offering new images for divinity—images that called into question *יְהוָה כָּרֶב*, the rabbinic depiction of God as the Lord and king. Because I crafted my theological metaphors to connect specifically to the occasions they marked, and because my language was rooted in biblical and rabbinic sources, as well as texts from later Hebrew literature, my first blessings could be read as a kind of midrash on the historical tradition. (“Tradition” is a word I use broadly—as with the Hebrew *masoret*, whose root means “hand over”—to refer to everything in Jewish civilization that has been handed down to us from the past, and also what we contribute to it with our own hands today.) For example, my **Blessing Before the Meal** was an adaptation of the traditional *hamotzi* prayer. But instead of addressing God as *adonay elohéynu, mélekh ha'olam*, “Lord our God, king of the world,” I evoked the image *eyn hahayim*, “wellspring (or fountain, or source) of life,” thus suggesting a different way to apprehend the divine and awaken gratitude for the body’s nurturance. And in place of the passive construction *barukh atah*, “blessed are you,” I chose to say *n’vareykh*, “let us bless.” In making this change, I was not only moving away from a gender-restricted (which is to say, masculine) form of address (as you know, in Hebrew, the second person, “you,” as in “blessed are you,” is always gender-specific, whereas the first-person plural imperfect, as in “let us bless,” is, felicitously, gender-inclusive). I was also trying to do something else, something I felt was equally important: reclaiming the power of utterance—the power and responsibility of blessing—for the human community of speakers. Thus my **Blessing Before the Meal**, reads (**pp. 18-19 in The Book of Blessings**):

vtmru  
dhjv lbg ,t lrd  
rtv in ojk vtmru

#### **Blessing Before the Meal**

*Let us bless the source of life  
that brings forth bread from the earth.*

I first presented my new blessings publicly in 1983 and again in 1984, and then, in early 1985, I published a few of them with an accompanying essay in a national Jewish magazine. As a result, these new *b'rakhot* began to circulate informally across the United States and also in Israel. It wasn’t long before people were extrapolating from them to write new blessings of their own.

This response was gratifying in several ways. I was moved that my work was finding a place in the Jewish community, and I was especially glad to see it inspire a burst of new writing in Hebrew, since almost all liturgical innovation in recent times has been in English. But the results were not quite what I had anticipated. My early blessings were, for me, starting points in the creative process; I had never intended them to be used as *blueprints* or prototypes. The metaphor of *eyn hayyim*, “source, or wellspring, of life,” had come to me within a particular poetic context—as I was searching Tanakh for an image of the land to use as a metaphor for the divine in blessings for bread and wine, gifts that emerge from the earth. I knew I had found the image I was looking for when I came upon this verse from *Deuteronomy*

8:7), which describes “a land of watercourses, wellsprings, and depths emerging from valley and from hills, “éretz nahaley mayim, ayanot uthomot yotz ‘im babikah uvahar. By connecting the *ayanot*, “wellsprings or fountains,” of this verse with the word *hayim* “life,” I created my first new theological image, *eyn hahayim*, “wellspring, or source, of life.”

I recall that when I first introduced this metaphor, its newness was startling to some readers; there were even those who concluded it was unconnected to classical Jewish texts—which was ironic, given its biblical origins. You can imagine, then, how astonishing it was for me to watch this image slowly take hold and, ultimately, become entrenched in certain Jewish circles as a “substitute” name for God. I was taken aback to hear people inserting the phrase *eyn hahayim*, “source of life,” randomly into the traditional Hebrew prayers in place of *adonay elohéynu, mélekh ha’olam*. To me, *adonay elohéynu, mélekh ha’olam* was an example of dead metaphor, that is, an overused image that has ceased in its original function to awaken our awareness of the great divine whole. Moreover, because this image has had absolute and exclusive authority in Jewish prayer, it has reinforced forms of patriarchal power and male privilege in the world. But I never believed that the alternative to this icon was a substitute image for the divine, since any single name or image is necessarily partial and would, potentially, be the basis for further exclusivity and distortion. Rather, from the very beginning I maintained that we should set in motion *a process of ongoing naming* that would point toward the diversity of our experiences and reach toward a greater inclusivity within the encompassing, monotheistic whole. As an *example* of what I was calling for, I offered *several* new images of my own—*among them, eyn hahayim*—and I expected that many more images would follow.

I was even less prepared to see the opening line of my **Blessing Before the Meal**, *N’vareykh et eyn hahayim*, “Let us bless the source of life,” treated as a new “blessing formula.” I had never intended this line to substitute *universally* or *automatically* for the rabbinic opening of the *b’rakhah*. Indeed, the creation of “blessing formulas” was far from my earliest designs. Rather, as a poet, I sought to create a fresh and organic whole with each new blessing; and, as a liturgist, I believed that no convention of prayer ought to become completely routine, lest it lose its ability to inspire authentic feeling.

Over the years, as I continued writing blessings, I experimented with language and form, varying not just words and images but syntax and, ultimately, literary genres. The creative process replicated the spiritual journey—or perhaps I should say that it *was* a spiritual journey, rich with the gifts of discovery and surprise. I wanted the products of my labor to evoke these feelings also in the reader, the prayer. In his essay on the creative process, “The Figure a Poem Makes,” Robert Frost writes, “No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader.” Writing a blessing is, for me, no different from writing a poem. If I could have my wish, the process would be one that “begins in delight and ends in wisdom,” just as Frost describes it. As I moved further and further away from the exhortative syntax (“Let us bless”) of my original blessings, I found myself attempting to suggest the presence of the sacred in less obvious, less predictable ways—until, at a certain stage, I was no longer using images to point directly toward divinity at all. (I will return to this point shortly, since it is probably the most controversial aspect of my work.)

That is how it came to be that different kinds of blessings and different literary genres appear side by side in this new prayer book: blessings in Hebrew and in English, meditations



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in English prose (which I call *kavanot halev*, directions of the heart), and poems—my own, and also those of other Jewish women poets writing in Hebrew and Yiddish, together with my translations of them into English. All of these are intended as forms of prayer.

In deciding what to include in *The Book of Blessings*, I tried to be realistic about spiritual needs and practices today. Although a large proportion of non-Orthodox Jews do not pray communally on a daily basis (except, perhaps, when saying *kaddish*), many still feel a need for some kind of daily prayer. So the Daily Cycle of the book includes blessings for mealtimes, along with two short sections of prayers to be said privately, **Blessings upon Awakening** and **Blessings for the End of the Day**. Two blessings from these sections, the *r'jav ,frc*, **Morning Blessing**, and the *v'sav ,trek v'frc*, **Blessing Before Going to Sleep**, are intended to frame the day with appreciation. While they mirror each other in sentiment, each is actually based on parts of the traditional prayers. In the **Morning Blessing (pp. 10-11 in *The Book of Blessings*)**, you'll hear some plays on the words of the traditional *nishmat* and *elohay n'shamah*:

*r'jav ,frc*  
לְכָה הַיְלֹד  
מִתְהַלֵּךְ כָּאָתָּה  
  
הַרְכֵּב וְרָבוּ סְעִירָה  
לְהַזְמָנָה

#### **Morning Blessing**

*The breath of my life  
will bless,  
the cells of my being  
sing  
in gratitude,  
reawakening.*

And in the **Blessing Before Going to Sleep (pp. 28-29 in *The Book of Blessings*)**, you will recognize imagery from the traditional prayer before *k'ri'at sh'ma al hamitah* (*hamapil*, or *hamey'ir la'olam kulo bikhvodo*):

*v'sav ,trek v'frc*  
הַלְגָה וְשָׁאַלְכֵי  
הַפְּגָה קָרְבָּנוּ  
  
וְהַשְׁעָרָה וְתִקְרָא  
אֲלֵינוּ  
  
וְהַשְׁעָרָה וְתִקְרָא  
אֲלֵינוּ, נָאָתָה

**Blessing Before Going to Sleep**

Sleep descending  
on my lids,  
on my limbs,

I call to mind  
the gifts  
of the day—

the gift  
of this day—  
and give thanks.

The Daily Cycle also contains a sequence of Daily Psalms—a different poem for each day of the week; this sequence is based on the ancient Levite practice of reciting the *shir shel yom*, a different biblical psalm each day. Unlike the biblical psalms, however, the poems in *The Book of Blessings* are intended as an aid to meditative awareness, which many contemporary Jews have sought in other traditions, such as Buddhism, but which, I believe, can be meaningfully had within a Jewish context.

While the Daily Cycle of the book is intended primarily for use by individuals, the Weekly Cycle, which is for the Sabbath, offers prayer for both the home and the synagogue. Since the synagogue is your professional domain, I'd like to focus now on a section of the synagogue liturgy.

What I'd like to share with you is from the central prayer of all synagogue services, the *amidah*. As you know, the *amidah* for Shabbat contains seven sections, seven *b'rakhot*. My new *Shaharit: Morning Service for the Sabbath* closely follows the structure of the traditional Shabbat *shaharit*; thus its *Amidah* too contains seven sections, each of which recreates the theme of its counterpart in the traditional *amidah* prayer. Let me take you through one piece—the second section—of this new *Amidah*, which is a liturgical collage of blessings, poems, and meditations.

The second section of the traditional *amidah*—*g'vurot*, “God's strength”—closes with a blessing affirming God's power to “revive the dead,” God as *m'hayeh meytim*. I have chosen this blessing to talk about because it is seen as particularly problematic by many Jews today; to wit, both the Reform and Reconstructionist movements have eliminated all references to “revival of the dead” in their new prayer books. (The Reform movement refers instead to God who “revives all,” *m'hayeh hakol*, and the Reconstructionist prayer book speaks of God as “reviving all that lives,” *m'hayeh kol hay*.) Although I understand the discomfort with *m'hayeh meytim*, God as reviver of the dead—which may conjure up Ezekiel's vision of the inspiriting of the dry bones and the revival of the dead from their graves in Messianic times—it nonetheless seems to me a mistake to completely expunge death from this blessing. For one thing, this is the primary place in the ordinary synagogue service where death is dealt with (the kaddish prayer for mourners does not specifically deal with death), and, for another, I don't think the motif of *t'hiyat hameytim*, “revival of the dead,” is more outdated or problematic than



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many other traditional themes—themes that are left intact and in place by the standard movement prayer books. Rather than selectively eliminate *t’hiyat hameytim* from my *Amidah*, I reinterpreted it, in a section entitled **Sustaining Life, Embracing Death** —**kdn dhjv** (pp. 193-203 in *The Book of Blessings*), from which I’ll read to you now.

Like all sections of my *Amidah*, this one opens with a kavanah:

*To celebrate life is to acknowledge the ongoing dying, and ultimately to embrace death. For although all life travels toward its death, death is not a destination: it too is a journey to beginnings: all death leads to life again. From peelings to mulch to new potatoes, the world is everrenewing, ever-renewed.*

After the meditation comes the blessing:

ihgnv ,t lrbo  
vfpn sg-hg  
dhjv kdn  
vhjn ,hmv

*Let us bless the well  
eternally giving—  
the circle of life  
ever-dying, ever-living.*

(This is the only blessing in the book that takes the form of a rhymed quatrain, in both Hebrew and English; the form here mirrors the theme, folding back on itself, connecting its end with its beginning.)

In this, as in other sections of the *Amidah*, the blessing is followed by a selection of poems that reflect further on the theme. As I mentioned earlier, these poems are by a variety of Jewish women poets—a small step toward correcting the imbalance of the traditional liturgy, in which women’s voices are virtually unheard. I included these poems not only to bring a diversity of voices into the service but to stimulate the reader to add her or his own voice as well. Here is one of my favorite poems from **Sustaining Life, Embracing Death**—a triolet (which is another rhyming form) by the great twentieth-century American-Yiddish poet Malka Heifetz Tussman:

בלעטער

בלעטער פֿאלן ניט. זי נידערן.  
עד-פֿאָרבּענְקֶטֶע זי קומָן פֿליגּוֹיךְ.  
אין אַעֲרַ צִיִּט זי וועָלן וַיְדַעַר וַיְדַעַר.  
וחיל בלעטער פֿאלן ניט. זי נידערן.  
זַיְוָעָלן וַיְדַעַר מִיט דַי צַחְיָגָן גַּלְדַּעַרְן.  
גרַן אָוָן שְׂמַעְכְּנְדִּיקְ אָוָן וַיְגַלְדִּיךְ  
וחיל בלעטער פֿאלן ניט. זי נידערן.  
עד-פֿאָרבּענְקֶטֶע זי קומָן פֿליגּוֹיךְ.

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**Leaves**

*Leaves don't fall. They descend.  
Longing for earth, they come winging.  
In their time, they'll come again,  
For leaves don't fall. They descend.  
On the branches, they will be again  
Green and fragrant, cradle-swinging,  
For leaves don't fall. They descend.  
Longing for earth, they come winging.*

And here are two of my own poems that also form part of this section of prayer on death and revival:

**Winter Solstice 1**

*Here you are, back  
in the bluwhite woods—  
how tall the birches,  
how delicate the pines!  
  
Standing on the frozen plot of snow,  
you suddenly know these trees  
  
will be your gravestone.  
Nothing stirs—but what  
are those sounds?  
You balance on the crusty edge  
while all around you ice  
invisibly thaws,  
beneath the snow  
the mushrooms smolder,  
and under your feet the unborn grass  
hums in its bed.*

**Winter Solstice 2**

*Warm breeze across the winter sky,  
the birchtrunk shedding its skin,  
ice beginning to give beneath your feet—  
  
It's alive, alive beneath the stillness,  
under the frozen surface of the pond,  
in the mosswebbed rock, alive!  
  
In the unseen hoof of the deer  
whose quick track lightly pierced the snow,  
and in all the unnamed footprints,*



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*and in all the longed-for music  
of the last dead leaves  
and the still-tittering birds, alive!  
And in the bronze of the inert star  
that melts the snow  
and erases the deer tracks,  
and turns wet skin to parchment,  
flesh to fossil, water to stone  
again—*

Following the poems, the blessing of the section is repeated, and each section concludes with the refrain *N'vareykh et eyn hahayim / v'khoh nitbareykh*, “As we bless the source of life / so we are blessed.” This refrain also reappears at other key points throughout the *Shaharit* service, functioning as a unifying motif.

Synagogue prayer is, of course, just one aspect of Jewish ritual life, even if it is the aspect of most relevance to the cantorial profession. But even professional Jews have private lives, and I know that many of you are parents or teachers of children. So I would like now to share with you my **Blessing of the Children**, part of my home ritual for *leyl shabbat*, which in *The Book of Blessings* is called ***Kabhalat P'ney Shabbat***.

As you know, the traditional blessing for children, recited after candlelighting on the eve of Sabbaths and holidays, is based on Jacob's words to his grandsons in Genesis (48:20): *Vayvarakhim bayom hahu leymor: B'kha y'vareykh yisra'eyl leymor, Y'sim'kha elohim k'e-fra'im ukh'm'nasheh*, “And he blessed them that day, saying: By you shall Israel bless, saying, God make you as Ephraim and as Menasheh.” Thus the traditional blessing asks God to make the (male) child be like Ephraim and Menasheh, and an adaptation for girls asks that they be like the foremothers Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. I've always been puzzled by this piece of liturgy. Although it may have made sense in the context of the biblical story, the articulated wish to have one's child be like Ephraim and Menasheh—or like *any particular* ancestors—seems to me off the point. Restrictive rather than expansive, this blessing does not open up to the full range of possibility and promise that ought to characterize youth.

I am reminded, in this context, of the famous Hassidic story about the righteous Rabbi Zusya. One day his disciples found him weeping and they asked him why. Rabbi Zusya explained that he trembled at the thought of being asked at the end of his life, as he approached the gates of heaven, not the question “Zusya, why were you not Moses?” but “Zusya, why were you not Zusya?” It doesn't seem from this story that Zusya would have been at peace having lived the life of Ephraim or Menasheh—and why should we expect that he would?

Indeed, why should we wish for a child to be anything other than her or his best self? Not living one's own life—not being true to the unique configuration of gifts and potential that nourish the self from within—is a tragedy. Yet letting a child be herself, himself—letting go of expectations that do not emerge from the reality of who the child is—is one of the hardest lessons parents have to learn. So once a week, at the onset of the Sabbath just after lighting the Sabbath candles, I remind myself gently, as I kiss my son's hair, what it is I really want for him. “Abraham Gilead,” I say, “be who you are,” *heyeh asher tihyeh*. These words echo those

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spoken by the biblical God in Exodus 3:14, *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, “I am that I am,” which I understand as the ultimate expression—the very model—of authentic being. The blessing as a whole, as I say it to my son, reads like this (this version is in the masculine; the book also has a form for girls; (**pp. 124-25 in *The Book of Blessings***):

shuvsh ,fir  
sh  
sgnd ovrt  
[shva]  
viv, rat viv  
lucvhu  
viv, ratc

**Blessing of the Children**

*Abraham Gilead,  
(the child's name)*

*Be who you are—  
and may you be blessed  
in all that you are.*

The purpose of this new blessing—at least as I use it in my own life—is twofold: to provide affirmation for the child and to foster awareness in the giver of the blessing. It was not my intention to encapsulate in this blessing the complex totality of being a parent, which, of course, entails many things—guidance, nurturance, teaching, and much more. Rather, I see this blessing as a spur to a *particular* kind of knowledge at a particular moment in time—that pause that occurs at the onset of the Sabbath during which we let go of our strivings and take note of the world's abiding gifts. In this framework of appreciation on Sabbath eve, as we celebrate the whole of creation, we pay special attention to the children in our midst, thankful for their being, accepting of who they are, hopeful that they will blossom into their best selves.

I must tell you that when I first wrote this new blessing, I expected that I might be criticized for appropriating God's words—the ultimate chutzpah, perhaps. But no, the biggest criticism was of a different nature, and it came from an unexpected source—my son when he was three years old and still very much in the throes of nay-saying characteristic of his age. As I bent over his head one Friday evening and whispered the words that were by then familiar to him, “Abraham Gilead, be who you are,” he suddenly bellowed back at me, “I don't want to!” “All right, then,” I said, with as much patience as I could muster, “be who you want to be.”

There's a postscript to this story that's arisen since the publication of the book. Abraham Gilead (Abby) is now seven, and he no longer protests when I give him his blessing. Instead, he turns to me and says, *Ima, hayi asher tihyi*, “Mommy, be who you are,” and continues with the feminine version of the blessing. It is touching to me that Abby has internalized this blessing so deeply that he is able to give it back, turning it, as he does so, into a dialogue of mutual respect.

But perhaps by now you are wondering where is the divine in all this, in the several bless-



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ings and poems I've read to you today. I must tell you honestly: nowhere in particular—yet, potentially, *everywhere* that attention is brought to bear. If everything is capable of being made holy, as rabbinic Judaism teaches with its scrupulous attention to the details of ordinary life, then surely we need not—we *ought* not—localize divinity in a single apt word or phrase.

I hope by now it's clear that *The Book of Blessings* is only a branch of a tree, a tree whose seeds were planted three millennia ago by a woman who prayed from her heart. It is a branch of Hannah's tree—Hannah, who found her voice uttering her own words of prayer and who, centuries later, became the rabbis' model of authenticity.

And it is a branch of the rabbis' tree, which they cultivated and tended, so that it grew and changed shape throughout their era, hundreds of years before Jewish prayers were codified. It is a branch of a tree that flowered in the hands of the *paytanim* and the voices of the *hazzanim*. It is a branch of a tree that did not stop growing even after the printing press was invented and prayer books became standardized, a tree that remained an organic thing, ever adapting and evolving. *The Book of Blessings* sprouts from a living tree that seeks to go on bearing fruit into the future.

*The Book of Blessings* is for those immersed in Judaism, and for those standing at its gates, looking for a way in. It is, especially, for those of us who, at some time in our lives, have stood like Hannah outside the sanctuary's walls, suffused with longing, or anger, or pain. May these words be, for you, for us—all of us—another beginning. Above all, may this book invite you to add your own voices to the whole—the diversified whole of *k'lal yisra'eyl*, the community of Israel, and the greater wholes of all humanity, all creation.

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*The Book of Blessings: New Jewish Prayers for Daily Life, the Sabbath, and the New Moon Festival* is available from booksellers, from amazon.com, and from the publisher, Harper Collins, at 1-800-331-3761. Synagogues wishing to purchase copies for liturgical use can receive a special, 45% discount when ordering four or more copies. Call Harper, Special Sales, at 1-800-207-7945 (ask for Stacy Horne or Kurt Truong), and say that you have been referred by the author for the special synagogue discount for *The Book of Blessings*. For more information about this, about Marcia Falk's other books, and about her lectures and other programs for congregations, please go to [www.interbridge.com/marciafalk](http://www.interbridge.com/marciafalk).

## **Updating Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program**

**Hazzanim Perry Fine and Erica Lippitz, South Orange, NJ**

**Chair: Hazzan Neil Schwartz, Reading, PA**

*Hazzan Schwartz:* Before introducing our presenters, I am going to introduce the newest publication of the Cantors Assembly, sponsored by the Education Committee and four years in the making. We finally have Trop Flash Cards. We tried to cover all bases. There is a student set of ivory cards with open boxes for conjunctives (or ‘joiners’ I call them for students), and white with shaded boxes for disjunctives- ‘separators’. They are packed together with a sheet of ‘families’ according to Rosowsky and Binder, and there are subsets of those families. This was originally developed when I was Rosh Hazzanut at Camp Ramah and continued over the ten years at my current synagogue. For teachers we have gantser groyser cards you can see from the back of the room, and strips based on Rosowsky’s six clauses. There is also an extremely dense sheet of background material meant for experienced teachers. There is also a bibliography and teaching tips, for example how to use flash cards in general.

Perry Fine has been the Hazzan at Congregation Beth El at South Orange for the past five years. He has a Masters in Music Education, and is on the Faculty of the Seminary teaching Cantillation. Erica Lippitz is Hazzan of Congregation Oheb Shalom also in South Orange. She has training in Music Therapy, and is coordinating editor of our new Camp Ramah shiron, and is co-director of the New Jersey community choir Kol Dodi.

*Hazzanim Perry Fine and Erica Lippitz:* This session is one of teaching to experts- you all spend a lot of your time teaching bar/bat mitzvah. But we have a certain perspective that we have developed that we can share.

The first thing that is very unusual in our program is that in our seventh-grade program both our Hebrew Schools are combined. That gives us two cantors and two rabbis and a part-time administrator for this program. The program is holistic and family-based, and is a two-year course: to create a more serious 13-mitzvah aspect in seventh-grade, we teach Torah trop in sixth-grade. If you teach Torah trop in the fall and haftara in December-January you’re already too late for half the class. The sixth-grade course is based on Charles Davidson’s system of tutors in Philadelphia, and gets kids to read a pasuk or two in front of their peers in Junior Congregation. That has freed us up to finish most of the ‘skill-work’ in seventh-grade by January. So our seventh grade on Sundays, part of a three-day week, focuses on talit and tefilin, doing a shaharit service, with a snack so we can teach birkat hamazon and mussar, and then haftara trop, Ashrei etc.

We are going to focus on something that begins in a small way in the fall and continues in earnest in the spring, the 13-mitzvah component. I struggled with the question: ‘What am I teaching these children?’ I realized something with a shock after taking an informal poll with my kids about seven years ago - my kids do the Friday Night kiddush at the service on the eve of their bar/bat mitzvah, and I asked them how many do that at home. Maybe ten per cent did anything resembling a full kiddush, another ten per cent did one line, the rest didn’t know what I was talking about. We’re talking about the affiliated! I thought - Is it worth teaching about conjunctives if a kid can’t do a Friday Night kiddush? What would compel the student to be a Jew after 13? Not just to invite them into the service, but what’s compelling about Judaism?



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Now that they're at an age when they can think more seriously about that and their mind is more open to these sorts of questions, are we doing our job in that vein as well? Likewise, as we experienced parental pressure, we thought: Should we turn the school into a two-day school? I asked myself, 'Why are we arguing over two or three days?' Now I'm speaking as a mother: if someone said, 'I'll put your seven-year old or your ten-year old in a program that will make them such a mentsh - for three days a week we're going to teach manners, self-respect, giving to others, pride in your work' - I'd want that to be five days a week! I wouldn't be arguing it down to two days if it was of tremendous importance. So I want to look at our whole bar/bat mitzvah program from a whole new question - not, 'What can we cram in and how much Torah can the kid read?', although we all have to deal with that, but, 'What makes this a compelling program for our children?'

First of all: *Torah, Avodah, Gemilut hasadim*. That's the principle that we built the program around. We explain this to parents in June prior to meeting the kids.

*Torah*: leading students to understand and affirm the Jewish values and theology that compel our learning, prayer and deeds. During lessons we constantly stop and talk about a portion of the tefilah or even one key word. So often we find kids can do the rote - and rote is important, you need those skills - but understanding is as important, even on a basic level. And the spiritual level is part of Torah as well.

*Avodah*: teaching students to master prayers and rituals in the home and synagogue. I'm sure you all teach trop - we want the kids to come back. I learned my haftarah from a record - not a tape! - and that was the last time I did a haftara for many years, and I didn't read Torah at all.

*Gemilut hasadim*: teaching personal responsibility for communal mitzvot beginning now in our lessons.

We are training not just for bar/bat mitzvah but for life.

Next the 13 Mitzvot for the year. It's not 13, it's more. We have family programs because if you don't have the whole family involved not a lot will stick. Now we know the bar/bat mitzvah year is a crazy year for everyone involved. They're going in a zillion directions, not to mention their own parties or whatever. It's still important that the parents come. At the beginning of the year we give the parents two firm dates when they will be required - we have to be super-organized about this. As a result of the parent reaction we went from two to seven. Every year we get more requests to do this by the families involved.

Most of these mitzvot programs take place from January on. We teach the skills earlier on and we want an incentive, we want to spice up the program for the second half of the year, particularly for those who have already had their bar/bat mitzvah say in December - what is the incentive for them to stay in the class? Every week they're doing something different - it's exciting and interesting.

When they go to hospitals etc. they are all local, so we all meet there. The parents arrange car pools. We used to do buses but they're expensive.

In the middle of the week this program is taught by the regular teacher, but on Sundays we do it. If we're doing kashrut, the teacher will talk about kashrut during the week to get them primed up for the Sunday event at the butcher or the rabbi's house.

When we go to the old-age home we do the tefilah there. It was exciting for the kids, they knew

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they had something they could share. You know what it feels like to see the seventh-grader who's the fidgiter in the Sunday minyan be the one sitting next to an older person pointing out where we are in the prayer book - it was worth it just for that.

One of the last mitzvot is Shabbat - a Friday night dinner and service that the kids lead.

With regard to family attendance at the fifteen services a year, we encourage it, we don't demand it.

*Question from the floor:* This looks like a religious school activity, it is not specific to the cantor's role. It looks more like the assistant rabbi's role.

*Hazzan Lippitz:* This is a critical question. I don't want the child to say, 'I thank the cantor for teaching me to read the Torah, and the rabbi for teaching me what Judaism is...' I want them to say they learned from the hazzan not just how to read Torah but how it is written, why it's a mitzvah: 'From the cantor I learned about Jewish life'. It was developed by us because we were in charge of the Sunday program and the rabbis were not. Most of these programs are run by cantors not by rabbis so they have to decide if they want to expand the program beyond just the skills. This does not create a problem with the rabbis. They are involved, they come in and teach for example the funeral etiquette. We're still fine-tuning the program.

*Speaker from the floor:* We have a similar Sunday morning program but the educational director does tefillin and so on and the cantor does cantorial aspects such as trop...

*Hazzan Lippitz:* If you can get other people to run it, gezunterheyt. You decide what the program might be...

*Speaker from the floor:* What if I don't have a degree in education, how do I write a course?

*Hazzan Lippitz:* We've written it for you! Everyone here is running something different right now. We're not suggesting you swallow this program. This is something we've been developing intensively for five years. We think it's at a stage from which you can learn. We are going to go into more detail into the three programs that are the most accessible and successful and that you could start this year with the sample papers we have handed out today.

The sofrit program: We have a sofrit come in on a Sunday morning. So at 9:30 is tefilah, perhaps the rabbi will give a dvar tefilah. At 10:15 is breakfast with brakhot and dvar Torah. Then we divide into two groups. One group stays with the sofrit. He spends about 40 minutes teaching. The other group goes into the main Sanctuary with one of the cantors. We practice an aliyah and the brakhot, hagba, gelila, petihah, the choreography...Lots of parents don't know, it's been ten years since they had an aliyah and they don't know what to do. They're very embarrassed to ask. So we use this time with small groups to give parents a chance to practice. It's not so much the words but the choreography - start on this side, then go to this side, touch the Torah..do you know your parents' full Hebrew names...We're giving them that help way in advance of the event and it creates a relationship between you and the parents. Also they can teach their guests. We teach synagogue honors, also what a maftir is - we explain the number of aliyot, who's going to be called up.

*Question:* What about parents who are already knowledgeable?

*Hazzan Fine:* They may think they know - how many know they have to hold on to the ets hayim? If they are more sophisticated, then gear your program to them accordingly. We have regular shul-goers but they tend not to be the parents of the 13-year-olds. Also, if you have five parents, and one already knows, let him be the teacher. Apart from these basic skills, we are



trying to teach something of theology.

*Another item:* We issue a letter and questionnaire relating to continuity and family identity - our 'genealogy workshop'. We want kids to understand their bar/bat mitzvah in relation to their family, not just the community. Parents and kids don't often talk about 'What does it mean to be a Jew in our family?' When you send this questionnaire, the kid has to talk to the parents. Most kids don't even know their full Hebrew name. They'll find out what it is, who they were named after. They will present their family history to their group on Hanukkah. We have a program on motsaei shabbat on Hanukkah, they all bring their own hanukkiah and it's just stunningly beautiful. They also bring in something they can hold and talk about. It gets conversation going, for example they ask, 'What was bar/bat mitzvah like for the parent?' With inter-married couples we say, bring memorabilia from the non-Jewish side of the family too. They bring Americana, nothing tasteless...

*Another item:* Jewish funeral etiquette. The first time you go to a funeral is for the death of a loved one. It's a traumatic time. We take them to a funeral home when it's not traumatic. They learn about death and dying. It's run by the rabbi. The family meets there. The questions just keep coming and coming from the kids and also the parents - they are especially grateful for this program. We have a tour of the coffin and body preparation rooms. We have a discussion of practical issues - burial costs, the responsibility of the funeral home to a person who cannot afford it... And then we talk about the kaddish and so on.

*By the way:* If a kid misses a session, they make it up some other way - they don't want to miss out on a great program. Our attendance is very good - for reminders we send letters and make phone calls...We get 99 per cent attendance...If you get a no-show family you know you are dealing with a greater dysfunction than just this program.

We have other trips with question sheets. We might go to the butcher...Before Pesah we go to the rabbi's house and the rebbezin talks about what it takes to make the home kosher. Before the trip for bikkur holim we have prepared questions to be discussed.

We also send out a questionnaire in the spring to sixth-grade parents. What they tell us may or may not change our program, but it changes the parent. They feel invested - you've asked them what they value, and you're going to find out about the parents and they will feel the program is a reflection of them.

## **Cantors and Technology**

**Hazzan David Propis, Houston, TX**

**Chair: Hazzan Martin Leubitz, Rochester, NY**

*Hazzan Leubitz:* If we were to go back for fifteen to twenty years of Conventions, the idea of having a session at all on computers by hazzanim would not have been something we would have thought of doing, yet we have come to a point where computers are no longer considered toys, but useful tools. We will today show you how we have been using computers for the last fifteen to twenty years. We are using them in two ways: for administration and organization, and for music and transcription.

*Hazzan Propis:* I have hazzanut in my blood, so my mother made me take courses that would help me make a real living. I grew up in Philadelphia, where I received a Bachelor's in Computer Science. I was in the middle of my Master's when I was intrigued by a project I was given by a bank: to design a way so that people would not have to go into the bank to put their money in or get it out. I wrote a program that my instructor copyrighted and now you use it as an AT machine. That's my big claim to fame in computers!

We are going to talk about the computer in your office, some myths and promises...Those of you who have computers, I view you not as administrators but as musicians using the computer to aid you. We have a sheet about sequencing software, wonderful sound cards, not the usual kind of stuff. There are wonderful musicians out there who are using computers to produce most of the recordings that you buy today.

How many of you have a computer in your office? (*Counts hands.*) That's about three-quarters of the room. We did this same session in Florida in December and I think it was less than half. And when we did something like this seven or eight years ago there was not even a handful.

I'm going to be talking about keyboards and music software that will help you record and write music, also for use in choir rehearsals and live performance. We will also talk about music scanning.

If your synagogue can give you an office they can give you a computer. From now on it should be a given. It's no longer a question of, 'Oy, can we afford it??' If they can afford a desk they can give you a computer. Here are some basic recommendations, but they're going to change next month - or even tomorrow. This is a very dynamic industry - most of the hardware you buy is outdated before you take it out of the box. There are two ways to go - either a PC compatible or a Mac. If your shul has a PC you should also get one and use your Mac at home. The going type of PC today is a Pentium processor but in six months it's going to be replaced. The 133 MHz was recommended six months ago but now the standard is 166. The bottom line is speed - it's not so much how much you can store but how fast you can do it.

Six months ago we weren't even thinking about 'gigabyte' - a thousand megabytes. A year ago, a hard drive that you could upgrade to, maybe 80Mbyte, was about \$300. For that money now you can buy a 2Gbyte drive. So you need a fast processor, lots of storage on your hard drive, 16 Megs of RAM, and you must have a modem, but it's not an option any more. I recommend a 288 because it's the easiest thing to buy. You also need a printer - not a dot matrix, buy a laser or a bubble jet. Then you need a clean phone line. Does everyone have a phone in their office? Yes. How many have a private line? Some of you. I have a private line - at first I told



them I would pay for the installation out of my discretionary fund and they paid the monthly payment. That is my modem line. Nowadays most synagogue offices are installing 'fast phone lines' or ISDN for the Internet. I also have to plug HazzaNet. Faxing is also important, so you don't have to go all the way to the synagogue office, you can do it through your computer.

**Software:** There are four basic points. You need something for word processing; spread sheets for expenses, discretionary funds, bnei mitzvah lists; databases for a congregational roster, choir members etc.; and finally music applications - notation printing, 'sequencing', which is a multi-track recording unit, writing charts for bands (melody line plus chords). There is also hard disk recording which needs more memory and clean lines.

We find there's a four-year technology cycle, it takes four years to get a new product on the market. There's always a greater up-front cost and then it takes time to depreciate. Hardware and software support is very important - make sure you have the support when you buy. The first year you're going to spend a lot on hardware and a lot on software that you need. There is an annual or monthly fee for support - don't try to save money by ignoring support, which means warranties and a 24-hour phone help line. We had a problem the other night turning on the lap-top, 1 a.m. on Memorial Day - we called the computer company and they were there to help us.

*Now for some myths:*

'Computers will save you time and money' - true or false? Most of the time it's true, but the learning curve is great.

'Scanning music takes hours to fix' - this is because the character recognition is difficult. We write our music, and printed music does not have a standard font. It would take a lot less time to play it into a program like Cakewalk, take the program as a midi file, bring it into a scoring program like Encore, look at it on the screen, clean it up and print it - that will still be much faster than a program like Midiscan.

'Computers will solve your problems'? There are some situations that computers can help you with but there are times when we rely too much on them.

'Computers will help you be more productive'?

*Comment from the floor:* I'm spending just as much time at work as I used to but I'm getting three times as much produced.

**Hazzan Propis:** When you want your synagogue to buy you additional options, you must justify them. I wanted to buy a scanner - well, we had a program coming up, and the printing costs were astronomical. The \$2000 scanner was cheaper than a \$4000 print job so I got it. Also you can show evidence that other synagogues are using such equipment. I have videotaped a session here that used a \$5000 keyboard so that I can justify my synagogue buying me one.

Automate your office as far as is affordable. Upgrade your equipment and take seminars, and get your synagogue to pay for it. There are free courses at community colleges and programs on public-access TV. You can get technical support through their website. I was on hold for twenty minutes, and while I was waiting I found the answer on their website.

**Hazzan Leubitz:** I have been using computers since the 70s. I perform live with a laptop and I have a desktop for office organization. If I were you I would run, not walk, to buy a scanner. You take any information on your desk, music, anything, in ten seconds it goes into your

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computer. It costs you a couple of hundred dollars. This one is called a Visioneer Paperport. Laplink is a way to link your computer at home with your office computer, it sells for maybe \$59 or \$79.

Scheduler is a program for your schedules. You can load it onto a special Timex ‘Datalink’ watch by holding the watch to the screen, and you can then read the schedule on the watch. It sounds like James Bond but it’s emes, the watch costs \$99.

For b’nei mitzvah: I see twelve kids in an afternoon, one every fifteen minutes. I have a code to jot down their progress each lesson and I use a program called Sidekick for that. I use Excel spreadsheet for who’s going to read Torah each shabbat.

For calendars for yortsayt there is J-kel or Zmanim, but always check dates four times to check special haftorot, Aharei Mot/Kedoshim etc.

*Discussion from the floor:*

Do you need a laptop? They are twice as expensive as a desktop. I could not justify buying one.

But prices are dropping every week.

(*Demo of Sequencing and scoring programs including Cakewalk Sequencing.*) Sequencing is basically a multi-track recorder. The amount of tracks you can have depends on the memory you have. Cakewalk pro-audio allows you to do digital recording. This takes about 10Meg per minute of recording time. An album needs a Gig of space, a very fast hard drive and lots of RAM.

Think of your desk and your filing cabinets - the hard drive is the filing cabinet, the space on your desk is RAM. If you have a huge desk, you can do a lot at one time. With more RAM you can do more and do it quicker. To make Windows run efficiently you need 32 Meg of RAM.

(*Demo of printing*) The printed copy of the music is ready to give to the publisher.

Encore is a program for printing music. Another simple transcription program is Music Printer Plus. One of our colleagues learned to use it in a week. On a PC, Encore is easier. Finale is the Cadillac, the best. You can do full orchestrations. But it has a higher learning curve. Cakewalk has some problems as a transcription program, for example the beams come out only horizontally, which some publishers such as Velvel Pasternak will not accept.

(*Demo is halted because of technical problems.*)

This is something called the Vocalizer - it’s a ‘harmonizer’. We had a communal Seder. None of the choirs I had lined up could come to the Seder, so I came up with hooking the midi line of the keyboard to the vocalizer. I had a program which listens to the harmonies I play and reproduces the harmonies using my voice. It’s cloning! I play a chord and sing into it and it sings in harmony.



## 1] Cantors & Technology

Cantor David Propis Administrative Vice President

Cantors Assembly Inc.

Florida Regional Conference

Monday, December 2, 1996

## 2] Objective

- To present technological alternatives and aides for Cantorial use:
  - Use of computers in the Cantors office
  - Use of computers, keyboards, and music software in the choral rehearsal room
  - Use of computers, keyboards, and music software in live performance

## 3] Meeting the Needs:

### Hardware Requirements

*— if synagogue provides you with an office, they should also provide you with a computer)*

- PC (Pentium 133mhz, 2gb HD, 16 mg RAM, 28.8 Modem) or Macintosh (PowerMAC)
- Laser or comparable printer
- Clean Phone Line for dialing up Hazzanet, FAXing, etc.

## 4] Meeting the Needs:

### Software Requirements

- Word Processing (*letters, memos, FAXes, reports, song sheets*)
- Spreadsheets (*expense reports, budgets, B/M lists, discretionary fund, investment tracking*)
- Data Base (*Congregational roster, B/M roster, Choir roster, CA roster*)
- Music Applications (*Notation Scoring, sequencing, charts, hard-disk recording*)

## 5] Cost Analysis

- 4-year computer/ technology cycle
- Greater up-front costs
- Hardware/Software support very important

## 6] Myths VS Truisms

- Computers will save you time & money
- Computers will solve your problems
- Computers will help you be more productive

## 7] Available Options

- Get a computer (PC or Mac) if you don't already have one
  - If you have one, upgrade it to current hardware and software standards
  - Justify costs in the departments you are responsible for
- Get a secretary who is computer savvy
- Advantages & disadvantages

## 8] Summary

- Automate your office environment (to the extent is affordable)
- Upgrade your existing hardware and software
- Take as many classes and courses on applications you have or need
- Get on the internet and surf the information superhighway
- Good Luck!

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## Audio Hardware Supported by Cakewalk

7/25/96

This information is provided as an overview and a general guide to products which work with Cakewalk. Please contact manufacturers to confirm information about their products.

### Windows Sound Cards

The following products work with all editions of Cakewalk versions 4.5 and 5.0. Please contact manufacturers to confirm information about their products.

Manufacturer and Sound Card Model	Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price	Duplexing in Cakewalk Pro	Audio In's and Out's (Simultaneous audio recording/playback)	Synthesizer	MIDI Joystick Port	Phone
ADB Multiwave Pro	n/a	Full duplex, but DAT machines aren't duplexing	AES/EBU and S/PDIF	No	No	717-843-5833
Advanced Gravis Ultrasound P&P	\$149 \$199 for P&P Pro	Full duplex	1/8" stereo over 90 dB 20 Hz - 20 kHz	Wavetable GM	Yes	604-431-5020
Advanced Gravis Ultrasound MAX	Discontinued	May not duplex in some machines. Contact manufacturer for more information.	1/8" stereo over 90 dB 20 Hz - 20 kHz	Wavetable GM	Yes	604-431-5020
Creative Labs Sound Blaster 16 all revisions	\$99.95 for P&P	With full duplex drivers	1/8" stereo 80 dB 43 Hz - 22 kHz	FM	Yes	800-998-1000
Creative Labs Sound Blaster AWE 32	\$279.95	With full duplex drivers	1/8" stereo 75 dB 45 Hz - 22 kHz	FM and GM Wavetable	Yes	800-998-1000
Creative Labs Sound Blaster 32	\$169.95	With full duplex drivers	1/8" stereo 75 1 dB 45 Hz - 22 kHz	FM and GM Wavetable	Yes	800-998-1000
Digital Audio Labs CardD Plus	\$795	Full Duplex	RCA stereo analog/digital 93 dB 20 Hz - 20 kHz	None	No	612-559-9098
Digital Audio Labs Digital Only Card	\$495	Full Duplex but DAT machines aren't duplexing	S/PDIF	None	No	612-559-9098
Ensoniq Soundscape	\$129.95	Full duplex in Windows 95 only.	1/8" stereo Contact manufacturer for more specifications.	FM and GM Wavetable	Yes	610-647-3930
Ensoniq Soundscape Elite	\$159.95	Full duplex in Windows 95 only.	1/8" stereo Contact manufacturer for more specifications.	FM and GM Wavetable	Yes	610-647-3930
Mediarix Audiotrix Pro	\$295	Yes	1/8" stereo Contact manufacturer for more specifications	FM and GM Wavetable	Yes	619 829 8743
Mediavision Pro Audio Spectrum 16	Discontinued	No	1/8" stereo Contact manufacturer for more specifications	FM	Yes	541-882-1177
Microsoft Windows Sound System	Discontinued	No	1/8" stereo Contact manufacturer for more specifications	FM	No	800-426-9400
Boland RAF-10	\$249	Full Duplex in Mono mode.	1/8" stereo Contact manufacturer for more specifications	GM Wavetable	Yes	213-695-5141
Toshiba ESS Sound System for laptops	n/a	No	1/8" stereo Contact manufacturer for more specifications	FM	No	510-624-6200
Turtle Beach Systems Classic Multisound	Discontinued	Full Duplex.	1/8" stereo Contact manufacturer for more specifications	Proteus 1XR Wavetable with GM bank	Yes Proprietary cable not included	510-624-6200
Turtle Beach Systems Multisound Monterey	Discontinued	Full Duplex.	1/8" stereo Contact manufacturer for more specifications	GM Wavetable	Yes Proprietary cable not included	510-624-6200
Turtle Beach Systems Tahiti	\$295	Full Duplex.	1/8" stereo Contact manufacturer for more specifications	None	No	510-624-6200



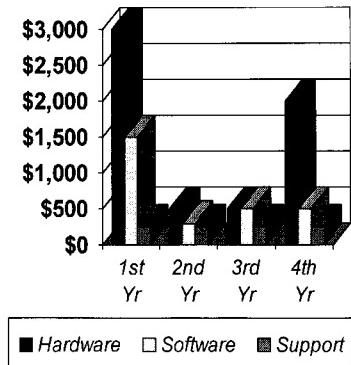
## Dedicated Audio Systems

The following dedicated audio systems work only with Cakewalk Pro Audio (but not with other editions of Cakewalk 5.0). Please contact manufacturers to confirm information about their products.

Manufacturer and Sound Card Model	Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price	Duplexing in Cakewalk Pro Audio (Simultaneous audio record/playback)	Audio Ins and Outs/ Signal-to-Noise Ratio/ Frequency Response	Synthesizer	MIDI Joystick Port	Phone
Digidesign Audiomedia III	\$795	Full Duplex.	RCA stereo and S/PDIF Contact manufacturer for more specifications	None	No	415-842-7900
Digidesign Session 8	Starting at \$2990	Full Duplex. Will record 8 audio input channels while playing 8.	Contact manufacturer for more specifications.	None	No	415-842-7900
Soundscape Technology SSHDR1 Systems	Starting at \$3,250	Full Duplex	2 RCA in 4 RCA out 1 S/PDIF in and 2 S/PDIF out. Contact manufacturer for more specifications.	No	No	805-658-7375

## Cost Analysis

- 4-year computer/technology cycle
- Greater up-front costs
- Hardware/Software support very important



## **Let Us Never Forget These Favorites**

**Hazzan Robert Kieval, Rockville, MD**

*Hazzan Kieval:* This session will look at quite a few older congregational tunes that those of us in the fifty-plus bracket learned as children going to shul. Many of those tunes we have never seen written out. I wrote out quite a few of them, and I dug deep down to find some more. Some are congregational melodies, others are choral things that we've made congregational tunes out of.

We're talking about the last hundred years, I suppose. You had a number of different styles - the great choral synagogues in Europe, like Lewandowski's shul, Sulzer's, the Tlomacka shul, all those places where you had big choirs and they did elaborate compositions. Then you had smaller shuls where they hired a hazzan with a bass and an alto, and they did smaller-scale things. A lot of those were recitatives with very little congregational content. But somewhere in the earlier part of this century it became very fashionable - and I believe it was Rosenblatt who started this tradition - to write a long elaborate recitative and the pre-concluding phrase had a little lidl that they stuck in. Or sometimes they had two. They may have sung it in thirds. It was not essentially used for the congregation per se to sing. When some hazzanim davened they used a leitmotif. Pinchik was famous for that. He had a little tune..



He used it for *Zeh mizeh* in shaharit, also in the Kedushah, and for *am amusim* in the Av Harahamim. When you have a recurring theme like that it's a perfect place for the choir or the bass and alto, or whoever they had, to hum that little melody and break up the recitative. I've used it. I know there are not a lot of traditional shuls that have choirs today, so very often you can take something and utilize the melody that's in that piece and not use it in four parts but just take the melody. There's a beautiful setting of Ein Keloheinu that was written by Zvi Talmon, who was the choir director at Hechal Shlomo. It was written for four part choir, but the melody is a terrific melody. It works as a congregational melody. His book was published by the Assembly and is now out of print. I have a copy that I got from a hazzan who passed away...

There was a story that when Aryeh Leib Rutman died, and Ganchoff was a great admirer of his, after the shiva they went to look for Rutman's notebooks. They couldn't find anything. Someone said Ganchoff had paid a shiva call, and after that they couldn't find anything...In school we had a wonderful way of getting Ganchoff sidetracked. We said, 'Did you ever hear Aryeh Leib Rutman daven?' and he would say, 'No, but I heard him sing at a concert once.' I said, 'If you had heard him daven, how would he do the long Av Harahamim?' and he would proceed to sing the composition that he said would sound like Rutman... It was Rutman, he must have heard him daven!..

Part of our problem today, as Sol Zim said, is that everyone is looking for spirituality. It's the in-word, but many people don't know what 'spirituality' is. Is it a bat-kol, are we waiting for



Hashem to speak to us? My philosophy is, if you come to tefilah unprepared you will not have any sort of experience. Lightning is not going to come down out of the sky and hit you - you have to know something about the service. People come to services and want to have a religious experience, but the only way you're going to have it is through a bit of knowledge, and part of that comes from going to shul. In my first year at my congregation, where I have been now for twenty years, some guy came for the High Holydays. I had started the previous Shabbat Bereishit and had sung a year's worth of music. We sang a different Adon Olam on the High Holydays. This gentleman said, 'I can't sing that, I've never heard it before.' I said, 'Well, I've been here almost a year and if you'd come to shul once in a while you'd know it.' It's remarkable that I've been there twenty years!...

You are dealing with a constant flow of people. My congregation was in downtown Washington for about sixty five years, then after the riots they moved out to the suburbs. They went from eleven hundred families to about three hundred, in the space of two years. When they moved to the suburbs, when I came there, they had about six hundred families. Now they have twelve hundred families. But the Washington suburbs are a very strange place, you get people from all over the country, people moving in and out, working for corporations or the government. Everyone has davened in a synagogue where they have tunes that are Misinai to them. They come to you and say, 'That's not the traditional tune, I know the traditional tune...' I say, 'Whose tradition are we talking about? It may be mine, or yours, or someone else's. It's what you're used to'. We all know it's humanly impossible to please all these people, but we need to make some sort of synthesis between davening, which is an alien function to most of our congregants today, and congregational participation, congregational tunes. I've tried to explain to my congregation, probably it's fallen on deaf ears, that the function of the hazzan and choir is to interpret in an esthetic manner the text of the liturgy. Somehow or other that has escaped them, primarily because they cannot function in the same manner as prior generations did, and being in the same congregation for twenty years I have seen it. Now I have to teach shaharit to baalebatim for the High Holydays, birkhot hashahar for Shabbat, because all of those older people, not only those born in Europe, but brought up in a shul atmosphere, have now practically died off. When I came there we had at least a dozen baalei tefilah that could daven anything, but now that's not happening. It's very important for us to try to revitalize that, otherwise we're going to be in trouble. If you're in a more traditional shul and you have a regular long service, do you want to daven yourself from birkhot hashahar all the way to ne'ilah? You'll drop dead. Although, when I was hazzan in New York, we had just one English reading - Veye'esou in English, and then I had to repeat it in Hebrew. But now you're lucky if you say one little section from malchuyot, zikhronot and shofrot - two lines, the hatimah and the sentence before it. So you need to find tunes to incorporate people into the service on a level that they are capable of handling, because you don't have people that daven. I said to my hazzan sheni, Nathaniel Schudrich, this morning at davening, 'This is something that we don't hear at the daily minyan any more, that hum of people davening, murmur. All you hear is silence.'

There was a discussion this morning about Yismechu being in the minor. The majority of tunes for Sim Shalom are in minor. The famous Mi Khamokha tune also (la-mi-do'-la etc.)..why? The upper part of the Ahavah Rabbah scale is minor. There was an article about

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that by Boaz Tarsi in the *Journal* a few years ago. Some people would go into major after that minor, or back to the Ahavah Rabbah. They use the same tune Friday night - most probably that's where it originated. Before I came to Washington we used to sing Binder, in freygish.

This morning we heard from B'nai Jeshurun. There they sing everything from beginning to end. That was not the kind of service I grew up with, but there was congregational singing, even at the beginning of the service. Jacob Kusevitsky was the hazzan. There were four bar mitzvahs on a shabbat. The hazzan would sing *Shokhen ad marom...*and the choir would repeat it. The congregation can repeat it. Jack Mendelson had a melody for *befi yesharim*, and there are other tunes in the Yishtabakh mode.

*Here are the main sources for congregational melodies:*

*Zamru Lo* ; Velvel Pasternak's *Siddur in Song*, Wohlberg's *Congregational Melodies*; Goldfarb's *Avodat Yisrael - Shabbat morning music for cantor and choir*, some unison, or 2- and 4-part; Noah Schall's 2-part collection; Wohlberg's 1947 collection.

Sometimes I found a tune that I liked but when I introduced it into the congregation it didn't catch on. Then when I tried again five years later, it caught on. There's no explanation... The trouble with *Zamru Lo* is that Moshe Nathanson z'l was very careful about milel and milra. But if you correct a singable melody you make it unsingable. I once had a conversation with Max Wohlberg about it. He said, 'I was very insistent on having the correct accents, but later on I figured out that when it was all in the right accents, nobody could sing it.'

*Comment from the floor:* Wohlberg is very big now in the Reform.

*Kieval:* That's news.

A lot of the old recitatives have tunes you can use, like Rapaport's *Retsei*. It was recorded by Ganchoff. The trouble with those recitatives is that they are incredibly repetitious. When I started out as a hazzan I used to sing all that stuff. I had a formula: I had one big piece in shaharit, one in the Torah service, and one in musaf, and something in the Kedushah. Everybody had that same formula. Not any more. There is a *Sim Shalom* that I heard from Jacob Kusevitsky, recorded by his brother Simcha. Yehuda Mandel z'l told me that the piece originally was from an Elokeinu *Retsei* for Friday night. It has a tune for *vetov be'einekha* in minor, so don't forget to return to the Ahavah Rabbah mode for the hatimah.

The lively tune we all sing for *atsabeihem* in Hallel will fit in nicely into Alter's *Lo lonu* in his Hallel book, but you must do it more stately, otherwise it will be incongruous.

For hotsa'at hatorah, when there is no choir, for Ein kamokha we do Sulzer for the first part, then Dunajewski. I think most people do that.

The tune we all sing for Ana avda is attributed to Zaidel Rovner. There is an alternative one in Schall's book. It was recorded by Lebele Waldman.

*Comment from the floor:* In my shul we don't do any of the numerous trite tunes for Kedushah. We use the proper tradition. We as hazzanim have to interpret the text.

*Kieval:* As a compromise I let them sing a tune for Kevodo and I sing the rest.

*Comment:* Why not let them sing their tune, then you repeat the words.

*Kieval:* That's what they used to do years ago, they sang a tune and the hazzan would elaborate...

We all know the Ledor vador of Finkelstein and the one by Sol Zim.



Years ago Uvyom hashabbat was sung as a big choral composition. Now we have a lot of tunes for it. The other thing you can do is use Torah trop. Larry Avery is a great proponent of that. It makes a change of pace for those sections of the davening that come from Torah... With regard to keys, D or E flat is best for the congregation but it's very low. So afterwards I just stop and carry on in my higher key.

## **Hesped**

**Hazzan Jack Chomsky, Columbus, OH**

Each year we gather together for a week of joyful assembly - an embrace here, a handshake there, a kiss, a glimmer of recognition in the twinkle of an eye. We renew and rejuvenate old friendships, create new ones. Each year we feast - on hazzanut, on too much food, on ideas, jokes, stories and gehakte tsures. But there comes a time each year during this gathering when we look around and perceive that some of the flowers of our field are missing. I invite you to look over the list of our departed colleagues. Place all the flowers you can in your field of memory. Some you may remember as beloved teachers, others as great pulpit artists, some as modest and humble practitioners of hazzanic art, others not so humble. Some are famous names you may know only through recordings or reputations; others may be totally unknown to you. Many of course you may recall as lifelong friends, and unceasing sources of inspiration and fellowship.

This year we mark the passing of six members of the Cantors Assembly, and take special note of two others of enduring importance to our calling.

*Israel Fuchs* was a one-of-a-kind beautiful soul who lived a fascinating, long and fruitful life. Born in 1910 in Trnava, Czechoslovakia, he studied music in Prague. He studied long and hard at leading yeshivot and was a true talmid haham. He sang with leading cantors in Europe prior to the Holocaust. He emigrated to the then Palestine and was a member of the Haganah. He served as hazzan at the Bet Knesset Hagadol in Tel Aviv from 1947 to 1957. He had many works published in Israel. Our own late beloved Hazzan Rosenbaum toasted him for his 'limitless talent, gentle demeanor, loyalty to our traditions' and complimented his great respect for our history. From the time he came to the United States in 1957 until his retirement in 1982, Hazzan Fuchs served Beth Abraham Hillel Moses in West Bloomfield, Michigan as a colleague of the great Shabtai Ackerman. Many of Hazzan Fuchs' beautiful compositions were published just two years ago in a beautiful large volume. To some he will be best remembered as the composer of what seems to us to be a Misinai tune, *vehareinu bevinyano*...To those who knew him, however, and that includes all the members in the Tri-State Region, he will be remembered as much more - a loving and dignified man with a warmth and gentleness few could match. We send condolences to his beloved wife Ayala, with whom he spent well over fifty joyful, musically rich years; to his son Nathan, daughter Nitza, and four grandchildren.

*Charles Lew* was born in Poland in 1913 and came to the United States in 1955. After serving Temple Sinai in Swampscott, Mass., for two years, he began a tenure at Temple Shalom of Medford, Mass., in 1958 which lasted till his retirement in 1983. Hazzan Lew was educated in Poland and studied privately for the cantorate. Cantor David Chasman z'l, recommending him for admission to the Cantors Assembly in 1960, wrote: 'He has a very fine character and good reputation, a man of learning, a talmid haham'. These words were echoed almost twenty-five years later by Hazzan Steven Dress at the time of Cantor Lew's retirement: 'It is my fervent belief that Cantor Charles and Esther Lew's instruction by word and by deed touched the heart, mind and soul of a complete generation. They were instrumental not only in the conservation of Judaism but the perpetuation of its precious traditions and values. Their lives have had a unique, almost mystical, quality which penetrated the inner spirit of the indi-



vidual.' As shaliah tsibbur, Charles always approached his shulhan with utmost conviction and dignity. His life was one of sacred duty on and off the bimah. His unwavering belief and scholarship in tanakh, talmud and tefilah,together with his sweetness of character and pleasing voice enabled him to render the tefilot with kavanah in its fullest dimension. Cantor Lew was a superb interpreter of tefilah and his improvisational skills were masterful. As a modernist he brought to the service at appropriate moments contemporary selections of Jewish music which provided a freshness and proper blend for the modern congregation. Virtually all of his waking hours were involved around Torah and sacred duty. Condolences to his beloved wife Esther.

*David Mann* was born January 1, 1921 in Belz, Romania. He came to the United States as a boy, graduated from High School in New York City, and received his Bachelors Degree in Music from New York University in 1941. As a youth he sang in the choir of Oscar Julius. Moshe Nathanson was among his teachers of hazzanut. During the Second World War he served in the Army as an assistant chaplain. He was very proud of his service. He served Temple Gates of Zion in Valley Stream, Long Island, for over four decades. Abe Shapiro remembered his beautiful bass-baritone voice and recalled what a gentle soul he was. He was the founder of the New York Metro Region Cantors' Concert Ensemble. Through the work of this group he raised a great deal of money and even more goodwill for the Cantors Assembly. He was a great contributor to the Assembly and he asked for little or nothing in return. Condolences to his wife Frances.

*Samuel Rosenbaum:* Yesterday a beautiful and fitting tribute was held at our Annual Meeting for our Moses, who led us from slavery to freedom, and through the wilderness. Sam served from 1959 as Executive Vice-President of the Cantors Assembly. At Beth El in Rochester he reigned from 1946 until his retirement in 1987. His many accomplishments are well known to our membership. He was an author and translator; he wrote several librettos for nationally and internationally recognized musical works for radio and TV; edited the *Journal of Synagogue Music*; and put his personal touch on everything which passed in or out of the Cantors Assembly office. He was a 1940 graduate of New York University and of the Hertzliyah Hebrew Teachers College. He studied music and voice privately and prepared for the cantorate under Cantors Jacob Beimel and Adolph Katchko. He received an honorary doctorate from the JTS in 1985, and three Cantors Assembly Kavod Awards. Shortly after Sam's death Rabbi Shamai Kanter of Beth El wrote: 'Sam brought great dignity to the bimah of our congregation, and fame to its name and reputation'. He never needed to talk about himself, or demand the respect which was his due. His knowledge of his own talents and learning was so firmly rooted that he walked through this world completely secure. Every cantor I every met described himself as a close friend of Sam's, and everyone confessed to relying on Sam's wisdom and leadership for his or her professional guidance. Everyone acknowledged that the dignity of the cantorate in the last half of the twentieth century as a calling of religious leadership was his creation and achievement. His students developed a deep feeling of the utter importance of Jewish prayer and the beauty of the Jewish musical tradition. He shared the burden of spiritual leadership with the rabbis of the congregation, counselling individuals with personal problems, planning the educational and cultural programs of the congregation, personally teaching liturgy and literature, editing the congregational bulletin, designing all the publica-

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tions and materials of Beth El, and presenting musical programs of national stature. We extend our condolences to his wife of over fifty years, Ina, and we continue to pray for a refuah shleimah for her; and to his children Judy and Thomas Witt, and Michael and David Rosenbaum, and to his grandchildren Abigail, Daniel and Adam.

*Chaim Rothstein* was from a traditional family. His father and uncles were Orthodox rabbis. He was proud to point out that he was a third-generation hazzan on both ancestral sides. He was trained by his father, Rabbi Hazzan Joseph Rothstein. He served as a shammes at fifteen, shaliah tsibbur for the hagim and yomim nora'im at sixteen and youth choir director at seventeen, under Dov Propis z'l. David Propis remembers fondly the hours spent preparing for services under Chaim's direction. He was a true baal nusah and taught correct nusah to anyone who would listen. He served various pulpits in the Philadelphia suburbs for over twenty years, also running a successful paper distribution business. In recent years he tried balancing his traditional Jewish roots with searches in new spiritual directions of Jewish renewal and the havurah movement. He was a well-respected teacher. In his last few months he and his new wife adopted the two young daughters of her sister. He died just before the High Holydays last year of a sudden heart attack at the age of 47.

*Reverend Arthur Sachs* came to the United States from Frankfurt am Main, Germany, in the early 1920s. He served most of his career as cantor and executive director of the Morristown Jewish Center, a unique institution which for a time combined Reform and traditional synagogues under one roof. Hazzan Sachs retired in 1977. Active on the Assembly's Ethics, Placement and Membership Committees, he is recalled for his humble and unassuming demeanor, love of a good story and ever-present cigar. He was always well-dressed and possessed great dignity. Prior to becoming a full-time hazzan he served as a chaplain in the United States Army. He trained in hazzanut under the great Yehoshua Weisser. Cantor Jeff Myers recalls Arthur's generosity in handing out small musical pieces to colleagues: 'Here, this will sound good in your voice.' He was a faithful and extremely active member of the New Jersey Cantors Ensemble, participating avidly well after his retirement. Preceded in death by his wife Jean, he is survived by a daughter and beloved grandson.

This year brought with it also the passing of two great luminaries who, although they were not hazzanim, and therefore not members of the Cantors Assembly, had a profound impact on many professionals in the field over the past thirty or more years.

*Dr Miriam Gideon* served as Professor of Music at the Cantors Institute of the JTS. She was a noted composer whose works were published and performed throughout the world. A 1926 graduate of Boston University, she received her MA from Columbia University in 1946. Dr Gideon served on the Faculties of Brooklyn College and the City College of New York prior to assuming her position at JTS in 1955. She also taught for many years at the Manhattan School of Music. She won an award for symphonic composition from the National Federation of Music Clubs and ASCAP in 1969, was elected to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in 1975, only the second woman so honored, and was a recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. She was awarded the degree of Doctor of Sacred Music by JTS in 1970. Dr Gideon described herself as the daughter of a non-observant rabbi turned philosophy professor. She grew up in Greeley, Colorado. As a youth she came to New York, where her uncle Henry, discovering her musical talent, informally adopted her and



brought her to Boston. Among her teachers were Lazare Saminsky and Roger Sessions. Dr Gideon was married for many years to author and scholar Frederick Ewen, the author of books on Schiller, Heine and Brecht. The Composers Guild BMI described Dr Gideon as one of the pioneers among women composers in America. She was a woman of strong convictions with a delightfully frank, straightforward way of expressing them. She shied away from overly analytical or thoughtlessly superficial labels in both human and musical spheres. While her opinions on women composers for instance may not have pleased the most ardent liberals, she did not hesitate to speak them. Gideon preferred to be known as a composer, not as a Jewish composer, although she had set Jewish texts and written two sacred services; nor as a woman composer, although her works have sometimes been performed by women's groups or recorded with works by other women. She composed many works in many combinations of voices and instruments. She created music of a wide emotional range, always evolving from both musical impulses and human responses to her environment. Music with text was always significant in Dr Gideon's output. Perhaps this was one of the reasons she was so interested in us, and we in her. On a personal level, although BMI may have remarked on her candor and frankness, I found she had a remarkable ability to find positive things to say about any work which was held before her. Let's face the music- not all the students at the Cantors Institute were gifted composers. Many, at least at first, lacked significant musical skills. Yet Dr Gideon could always find a way to encourage all the efforts of all the students. We should all remember trying to find the fine line between what is banal and what is merely appropriate. We will always remember her as a dedicated, patient and loving teacher. May her music and the music which she inspired in her students live on like the songs of the Psalmist.

*Dr Hugo Weisgall* was born in Bohemia in 1912. He emigrated with his family to the United States in 1920 and grew up in Baltimore, where his father Cantor Adolph Abba Weisgal served with distinction for many years at the famous congregation Chizuk Amuno. He studied at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, and like Dr Gideon he studied with Roger Sessions. He studied also at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. He entered the military in 1941 and following the war worked in various diplomatic capacities, thanks to his fluency in German and Czech. In 1946 he became cultural attache in Prague. By 1948 he had turned his composing energies towards opera. Among his most prominent works were *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, first presented by New York City Opera in 1959, and *Esther*, first performed by City Opera in 1993, and to be revived this October, one day before what would have been his eighty-fifth birthday. Many of his works were rooted in, or related to, Jewish tradition or history. Paul Griffiths in the *New York Times* wrote: 'Mr Weisgall's musical personality was robust and resilient, and needed to be. His adherence to a vigorous dissonant style caused him to be regarded as 'too modern' in the 1950s, and not modern enough, or rather not post-modern enough in the 1980s and 90s'. He didn't seem to mind. He kept to his own path, proving the powers of an atonal language to deal with a wide variety of situations. Dr Weisgall served for many years as chairman of the Faculty of the Cantors Institute and Seminary College of Jewish Music, beginning in 1952. His academic positions included instructor of composition at Juilliard from 1957 through 1969 and professor of music at Queen's College beginning in 1961. He was the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, including three Guggenheim Fellowships for composition, and a grant from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He

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was vice-president of the American Composers Alliance for five years and president of the American Music Center for ten years. Dr Weisgall will be remembered by us for his high expectations and strong opinions. It is true that he thought that the culture of his native Europe far surpassed American culture, and it is also true that he felt that the past was better than the present in American culture. He demanded that everything that passed before him be of the highest quality - if not, he would scowl, although he would restrain himself from direct expression of his thoughts, on most occasions. Praise from Dr Weisgall was not for the sake of making you feel good. If he had something positive to say, he most certainly meant it. If this is out of fashion in today's atmosphere of Political Correctness, it is no less useful. Would that all our teachers and colleagues demanded only the best from each of us and from themselves. A compliment from Dr Weisgall was something truly earned and treasured. May we dedicate ourselves to provoking a few smiles as Hugo looks down upon us from composers' heaven, sharing a twinkle in his eye as he looks with understanding to his colleague Dr. Gideon. Condolences to his wife Natalie, daughter Debra, son Jonathan and four grandchildren.

These flowers are missing from our field today. Perhaps their beauty can be seen and heard and felt in the heavenly realm, but we do miss them here on Earth. Yet the Psalm with which I began continues: *Ve-hesed Hashem me'olam v'ad olam al yirei'av* - God's loving kindness from eternity to eternity is upon those who search for Him, and His righteousness extends to their children's children.

We are left with the capacity to remember their songs, their smiles, companionship, vision, their temper and their lives. We are inspired by their example to keep the flowers blooming in our gardens today and always.

*Tihyu nishmotam tsrura bitsror hahayim* - may their souls be bound up in the bond of life.



## In Tribute to the Memory of the Great Hazzanim of Chicago - A Personal Memoir

Danny Newman  
Chicago Lyric Opera Company  
Hazzan David Brandhander, Chicago, IL  
Chair: Hazzan Alberto Mizrahi, Chicago IL

*Hazzan Mizrahi:* It is my pleasure and privilege to introduce someone who in the city of Chicago needs no introduction. Danny Newman is my dear friend and a colleague of all musicians everywhere, a man who is perhaps best known for having invented the subscription series - he taught the world how to do it, for opera and the symphony, and kept many companies alive because of that. A man whose heart and soul has been devoted to the Lyric Opera for forty three years, as PR man and administrator.

*Danny Newman:* On the invitation of Hazzan Mizrahi, I welcome you all on behalf of the Chicago Jewish Community. I have been steeped in opera not for 43 years, but actually this is my sixty-fourth year in this work - I was a child prodigy! But my love for Hebrew liturgical music and its gifted cantorial protagonists is even greater. Undoubtedly it has been my fascination with hazzonus since my earliest childhood that pre-ordained my entrance into the opera world. When our parents and grandparents arrived on American shores they brought with them a formidable cultural baggage, which included their heritage of centuries-old Hebrew liturgical music which they brought with their cantors, whose often astonishing vocal prowess and highly developed interpretative skills were steeped in authentic traditions of passionate prayer. Prayer rendered so powerfully that we thought they indeed penetrated the shaarei shomayim. Quickly these immigrants became aficionados of opera stars, listening to Caruso's recordings which were played on the Victrola in every Jewish home, alongside recordings of Yossele Rosenblatt, Kwartin, Hershman and other giants. I hope that you noticed the endearing, affectionate way we spoke of our favorite hazzanim - like 'Berele' Chagy, 'Lebele' Waldman... Like hasidim arguing that their wonder-Rabbi is the greatest of all, they contended that their favorite hazzan was the king of cantors. Forty years ago in Ramat Gan, I was walking from shul with Moshe Koussevitsky while hundreds of his ecstatic enthusiasts followed him chanting *Yehi hamelech hehazzanim* - Long live the king of hazzanim!

Seventy years ago I was privileged to be present for the American debut of the celebrated cantor from Odessa, Pesach Pinchik at the Anshei Nusach Sfard synagogue on the old West Side's Independence Boulevard. He had been imported by the colorful cantors' manager Joseph Heiman. Pinchik, who recorded as Pierre Pinchik, went on to achieve a fanatic following throughout America, where every Jew who took his hazzonus seriously identified Pinchik's fervent vocal embroidery with that of the humble baal tefilah in his own town in Ukraine, White Russia, Poland...Pinchik who was a *zinger un a zoger* was a great favorite of the ladies who sat behind the mehitzah and who sobbed endlessly on cue, such as in the Al Tashliahenu. Nowadays such unreserved, unembarrassed expression of emotion is rare among our congregants. Just forty years back, even the Galicianer shul's choir-leader here in Chicago was so car-

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ried away with Richard Tucker's rendition of this prayer that he fainted dead away, and a year later at exactly the same point he fainted once more.

By 1927 I had become a hazzanic groupie, with two major West Side hazzanim, Kalman Kleinowitz and Moshe Alexander living in our apartment building. To me, they were really glamorous. As a four-year-old I witnessed for the first time how the hazzan *fallt kor'im* - I called out clear as a bell, 'Papa, Hazzan Alexander fainted!'

Chicago in the 20s and 30s prided itself on the fame of its visiting cantors such as the fabulous Sirota, and in the 40s came the American-born Richard Tucker - Reuven Ticker - with whom I worked till his death. I am wearing the Hebrew-dialled watch he gave me, engraved 'In everlasting friendship'. In the late 40s came Moishe Oysher, he of the fabulous lyric baritone, whose films *Der Vilne Baalabeis'l* and *Yankel der Shmit* captivated us all. And then there arrived the truly great Moshe Koussevitsky, whom I first heard here in the Russische shul on Douglas Boulevard. In the 50s I presented him in recital at Orchestral Hall and then at the 8th St Theater. I was awestruck at his incredible ascents to the vocal stratosphere, where he didn't just reach high Cs and Ds, he seemingly stayed up there forever.

Having told you where I am 'coming from', I couldn't be happier than to be with you, the latter-day practitioners of the cantorial art and calling on this remarkable evening.

*Hazzan Mizrahi:* Let me introduce a beloved colleague, who could be called the Mr Chicago of Hazzanim, David Brandhandler.

*Hazzan Brandhandler:* In the early 1900s, Chicago was considered the Mecca of hazzanim. Famous and not-so-famous cantors came from all over the world. This was a lucrative market for them. They came not to stay but to concertize, sometimes even on Shabbat, many times on Shavuot. In reality they were auditioning for positions on the Yomim Nora'im. Understandably, this yearly turnover resulted in a minimum relationship with some of the larger congregations, and very little loyalty to the congregants. However, Chicago Jewry was more than blessed with hazzanim who made this their home, hazzanim who had an impact on this region, who left a legacy of which we are justly proud. Hazzanim whose names became synonymous with the name of the congregation they served, and thus established a healthy relationship. Hazzanim whose tenure in their respective synagogues reached twenty, thirty and even forty years. This region is proud of its present roster of hazzanim, but doubly so of those of the past. These deserve more than just a byline, but time does not permit. To mention just a few that I knew personally: I can still remember Hazzan Manowitz standing under the huppah when Sholom Kalib married his Goldie - a tremendous voice. He and Aaron Kritz were two towering personalities with outstanding voices. Cantor Newman, with whom I had the good fortune to sing, was not only a beautiful hazzan but one of the finest scholars of his time. Who can forget the special sweet quality of our own Tevele Cohen, whose rendition of the Sefira at one of our conventions was a not-to-be-forgotten experience, and this was in the twilight of his years.

Who among the hazzanim has not sung any compositions by Joshua Lind, one of the most prolific composers of his time? And Cantor Moses Silverman - to us he was just plain Moe. I was fortunate to be at his audition, for I was in the choir at that time, under Cantor Carl Urstein. It was an unusual audition, in that it was more of a recital, very little hazzanut. There were no questions, no answers. It was an audition whose success was pre-ordained. Those who knew



Rabbi Solomon Goldman z'l will know what I'm talking about. Cantor Silverman came to the Anshe Emet in 1938 as a young man, and in the next four decades set an example of what a cantor's position should be in his relations with his synagogue. A hazzan who rose in the ranks of the Cantors Assembly to become the president of that organization for an unprecedented three consecutive years. He was not only a gifted hazzan, an artist, but a great leader, an eloquent speaker, a hazzan who fought for the dignity of the cantor's position. Above all, a friend who never turned away a request to help a colleague by speaking at functions on his behalf. And finally, Todros Greenberg - my teacher, my mentor, the dean of cantors, steeped in the east European tradition of hazzanut, a visionary who in spite of being completely blind in one eye and partially blind in the other could envision the need for a formal school of hazzanut. That vision lay dormant until the conclusion of the Second World War, when the full impact of the Holocaust became evident, and its implications for the survival of Jewry after, as he described it to me often, the destruction of the fountain of European hazzanut. That brought an urgency to that project. With the help of Hazzanim Silverman and Sholom Kalib the school was established some fifty years ago, under the auspices of the College of Jewish Studies. The history of that project is a story for another time. Cantor Greenberg was also a prolific composer of cantorial and Yiddish music. He was a scholar with phenomenal recall, a role model, a father figure whose advice and counsel was sought by all.

As a region we are also proud of our publications. We published one volume of the music of Joshua Lind and a volume of Todros Greenberg together with the Cantors Assembly; and we also published entirely by ourselves a further three volumes of Greenberg, all through the efforts of his many loyal students and friends.

All these cantors of the past considered Chicago their home. From whatever land they came, they brought to this region their various nuschaot, styles and customs. And here the seeds were planted, here the Cantors Assembly was conceived, resulting in perhaps the longest gestation period in history! They formed an organization of cantors, the Agudas HeHazzanim of Chicago, wherein they established rules of conduct and ethics among the cantors, and between the cantor and the congregation. Not surprisingly their Placement and Grievance Committees were both led by Cantor Greenberg, for he had the necessary attributes, the tact, diplomacy, understanding, and above all love of his fellow-man. In looking back we find that in spite of all their differences the hazzanim had one thing in common: to a lesser or greater degree they were dedicated teachers of nusah and hazzanut. This was their greatest contribution to us and to all Jewry. We are the recipients of their legacy. In turn we must honor their memories by continuing to impart our knowledge to our successors, and so assure the preservation of our heritage as we enter the twenty-first century.

**Presentation of President's Plaque  
to Hazzan Abraham Lubin  
Hazzan Solomon Mendelson, Long Beach, NY**

*Hazzan Solomon Mendelson:*

I stand here *bidhilu urehimu*, with a deep sense of awe, for the privilege of bestowing the Presidential Plaque has been, for as long as I can recall, the role of our esteemed and beloved Hazzan Samuel Rosenbaum, *zeicher hazzan livracha*. And in a large sense he is very much here with us at this moment as well. His spiritual influence, his eloquence, his monumental legacy will forever pervade everything that we do in the Cantors Assembly. Friends, for the past two years, the Cantors Assembly has basked in the reflected glory of our colleague, spokesman and leader Hazzan Abraham Lubin. Abe's tenure as president represents the special combination, the special distillation of diverse talents that gave him a sense of mission, and that made him a unique custodian and purveyor of many accomplishments of which the Cantors Assembly can be justly proud. Abe, during your term of office you were a hazzan like any other hazzan, and at the same time like no other hazzan. You were like every other hazzan in terms of your full schedule of activities on behalf of your congregation, but when you add up the number of meetings that you attended, the commuting hours between Maryland and Broadway or the committees, the conferences, the causes, regional trips, representation at various bodies, countless hours on the telephone, in this sense you are like no other hazzan. And you brought your unique style to everything that you did. You were never anything but yourself. You were fervent in what you believed, you carried with you a rich tradition steeped in roots that take you back to Yerushalayim ir hakodesh and to your parents that helped to mold a talmid chacham. A first-rate mind, a heart that beats excitedly for people and ideas and a hazzanic talent that always uplifts and inspires. We entrusted the welfare of the Cantors Assembly and its members to your hands, and you proved to be exemplary. You accepted the challenges entrusted to you by your predecessors and you bequeathed new beginnings to your successors.

Your tenure as president was not just a holding action. Under your leadership several long-standing goals of the Cantors Assembly have been attained. Most recently, and for the first time, the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary saw fit to appoint one of our own hazzanim as Dean of the H.L. Miller Cantorial School, and we believe firmly that this augurs well for the future of hazzanut and for the relationship between the Assembly and the School. Abe, in your vision, your hazon, of what our Assembly should aspire to, you felt that we need to be recognized by, and interact more fully with, the larger community. And so with your prodding the Cantors Assembly was invited to become members of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, the elite and most prestigious body of Jewish leaders in the world today. This connection will surely bear fruit and ripen with time. On your watch there was an intensification of regional activities, furthering closer contact with our members who sometimes might feel ignored or detached from the major body. You have been our advocate, you have reached out and given of yourself constantly and without fanfare to the men and women of our Assembly, especially to those who might have needed a word of encouragement during trying times. We can paraphrase the Psalmist by saying: "The lines have



fallen upon you in special places". And at a particularly treacherous and vulnerable time for our beloved Israel, and again on your watch, when other prominent organizations were canceling their conventions in Israel, you insisted that we must not let Israel down, you gave us strength to convene as planned in Yerushalayim. And especially for masorti Jews, yours was a welcome voice in the Israeli media. You spoke up in your mother tongue for Conservative Judaism and for our egalitarian principles. Abe, you are a pride to all of us in so many different ways, but the central way is in how you comport yourself as a hazzan.

You are a master of your profession, a baal tefilah par excellence whose hazzanic imagination always carries us on wings of song to new spiritual heights. You are at all times most able to represent the Jewish community as shaliah tsibbur. In fact I might say that so intense is your love for your craft that you sometimes suffer from undelivered hazzanut, waiting for the right moment in order to find creative expression, and you personified and captured that moment just yesterday with your passion, an incomparable El Malei for our dear departed Samuel Rosenbaum. It would be impossible to cite, in looking over the past two years, all of your accomplishments and activities, but I believe that you have been singular in one specific area. I am not sure how many past presidents can boast of having added two new little voices in their lives during their tenure. I am sure you would include among your happiest moments and greatest achievements your blessings twice over of becoming a zeyde. May you always be privileged to go from simha to simha. And so, Avraham ben Reb Moshe u-Miriam, ne'im zmirot Yisrael, I have the pleasure of presenting the traditional president's plaque to you, with deep gratitude and the profoundest good wishes of every man and woman in our beloved Cantors Assembly. I present it with our prayer: *lech leshalom*. Flourishing at the site of the living waters of hazzanut, you are embraced by the love of your immediate family - your charming wife Sandy, your exceptional children and of course your new grandchildren, and those yet to come - and by the love which your extended family of the Cantors Assembly brings to you on this occasion. We feel privileged that we have had the zechut to be led by a man with such fine and fundamental talent, commitment and range of vision. Your term of office has been rich in achievement and we hope you feel that you have been touched by a special distinction. You have earned the approbation of your colleagues and a place of honor among us. My hope is that this time of transition for you will be viewed not as leaving behind a role in life but rather as a passing forward, a progression, as you join the illustrious circle of past presidents of the Cantors Assembly, those who are our life senators because of the qualities of mind and of heart and above all of their ahavat Yisrael. Abe, to you I am sure, the best is yet to come. *Hazak ubarukh*.

*Hazzan Abraham Lubin:*

I want to acknowledge first of all Sol - thank you for these words. I also want to wish my successor who was installed last night, Hazzan Henry Rosenblum, all the luck from the bottom of my heart.

It has been my privilege to be the last president to work with the late Hazzan Sam Rosenbaum. I spoke to him a day before he passed away. The morning of March 23 I heard of his passing and that evening was the concert for the Cantors Assembly. That evening I sang a prayer in his memory and I would like to sing it now. It speaks about the neshama, the soul: "So long as we have our soul that is pure, that You God have given us, we continue to thank You" - and he lit-

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erally continued to thank and create and work until the very last day of his life. The music is by the dean of hazzanim Todros Greenberg. I admired him greatly when I first met him, and I fell in love with all his music. I also want to recognize Todros Greenberg's daughter Marlene Miller who is here with her husband Rabbi Miller.